00031009

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

ESTIMATES

OF THE

ENGLISH KINGS.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

ESTIMATES

OF THE

ENGLISH KINGS

FROM WILLIAM 'THE CONQUEROR' TO GEORGE III.

BY

J. LANGTON SANFORD,

AUTHOR OF "STUDIES AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE 'GREAT REBELLION,'" ETC.

31009

'To be a king and wear a crown is more glorious to them that see it than it is pleasure to them that bear it.'

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

LONDON:

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1872.

All rights reserved.

00031009

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

TO

THE MEMORY

OF

WILLIAM CALDWELL ROSCOE.

PREFACE.

THE 'ESTIMATES,' now published in a collected form, have appeared at intervals during the last two years in the columns of the 'Spectator' newspaper. They were undertaken, at the suggestion of the Editors of that periodical, with the hope that they might assist in supplying a want which has been felt by many readers of English History, of some more distinct conceptions of the English Kings as living men than are supplied by the incidental notices scattered through the record of their reigns, or by the meagre and often incongruous summaries of qualities which precede or conclude the narrative of each reign. Though something has been done in this direction in the case of particular Kings, I am not aware of any previous attempt having been made, on the plan here pursued, to present a complete series of personal delineations of our Princes from the Norman Conquest. Such delineations are of more significance

and value as elements of National history in the case of England than in that of most countries, in consequence of the personal ability of the great majority of our Kings, and the close cooperation of King and People implied in the Spirit of the English Constitution.

There must be necessarily some appearance of dogmatism in a work in which conclusions alone are stated; so I have endeavoured, wherever space would allow, to suggest the considerations which led to the conclusions, or to illustrate the views put forward by corroborative facts. This was, of course possible much more in the earlier than in the later 'Estimates;' but I do not think that any Estimate will be found to be simply dogmatic. Though any attempt of this kind must as yet be, to a certain extent, *tentative* and *provisional*, the *positive* judgments here embodied have not been hastily formed; and I have little expectation that they will be materially modified by future historical investigation. At any rate their definite exposition will facilitate their correction by other historical students, and so contribute to form a more settled public judgment.

In availing myself of the best aids afforded by previous writers, I have not adopted the conclusions of any without thoroughly considering the grounds

on which they seemed to rest; and, as a consequence, I do not think that my view of any King's character will be found quite identical with that taken by any preceding writer, though it would imply absurd arrogance on my part if a greater or less similarity were not found in the great majority of the Estimates to the general tone of the conclusions of some other writer. A specific enumeration of authorities in a work of this description is impossible, but I may mention here a few of the writers to whom I am under the greatest obligations. Besides older standard historians, such as Hallam, Lingard, and Sharon Turner, I owe much to Mr. Freeman, Dr. Lappenberg, Mr. Pearson, Sir E. Creasy, Mr. Froude, Dean Hooke, Mr. S. R. Gardiner, Lord Macaulay, Lord Stanhope, Mr. Massey, and (not least) Sir Erskine May. Quite as much am I indebted to the various editors of the volumes issued under the authority of the Master of the Rolls and of the Camden Society:—in particular to Mr. Walter Shirley, Mr. Hingeston, Mr. Stubbs, Mr. Riley, Mr. Nichols, Mr. Halliwell, Mr. Cole, Mr. James Gairdner, Professor Brewer, and the late Mr. John Bruce. Other authorities I have referred to in the 'Estimates' themselves; but I must not here omit Sir H. Nicholas' 'Introduction to the Proceedings of the Privy Council,' the volume on Tudor Legisla

tion by the late Mr. Amos, the works of Mr. Luders and Mr. Tyler on the early life of Henry the Fifth, and Mr. W. D. Christie's Life of Lord Shaftesbury. For the reign of Charles the First and the Commonwealth, with which my own studies have made me most familiar, I have naturally relied more entirely on my own researches.

The 'Estimates' have been revised throughout, and a few additions and omissions made which seemed desirable.

J. L. S.

Athenæum Club: *August* 9, 1872.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
WILLIAM 'THE CONQUEROR'	1
WILLIAM 'RUFUS'	21
HENRY THE FIRST	34
STEPHEN AND MATILDA	46
HENRY THE SECOND	57
RICHARD THE FIRST	71
JOHN	84
HENRY THE THIRD	93
EDWARD THE FIRST	103
EDWARD THE SECOND	120
EDWARD THE THIRD	131
RICHARD THE SECOND	145
HENRY THE FOURTH	156
HENRY THE FIFTH	173
HENRY THE SIXTH	191

PAGE

EDWARD THE FOURTH 204

RICHARD THE THIRD 218

HENRY THE SEVENTH 233

HENRY THE EIGHTH 251

EDWARD THE SIXTH 270

MARY 281

ELIZABETH 292

JAMES THE FIRST 307

CHARLES THE FIRST 327

OLIVER, LORD PROTECTOR 347

RICHARD, LORD PROTECTOR 371

CHARLES THE SECOND 389

JAMES THE SECOND 405

WILLIAM AND MARY 417

ANNE 445

GEORGE THE FIRST 465

GEORGE THE SECOND 479

GEORGE THE THIRD 497

ESTIMATES

OF THE

ENGLISH KINGS.

WILLIAM 'THE CONQUEROR.'

THERE are many peculiar difficulties attending any attempt to draw the character of a King, but none greater than that which arises from his isolated position. This isolation has often been pointed out as one of the characteristics of Royalty, but we doubt if sufficient allowance has been made for it as an exceptional element in estimating the mental and moral calibre of Princes. We acknowledge that they stand alone, and in a vague manner we recognise that this fact ought to some extent to modify our estimate of their character; but we fail to make this modification in our actual estimate, because we have not sufficiently realised in detail the nature of this exceptional plea, and therefore are unable to give effect to it in regard to special points of

character. We say, in a general manner, that Kings are not like other men, and that they must not be judged by exactly the same rules, but we *do* in fact judge them, both for good and evil, in much the same way as ordinary mortals, and the significance of our vague deprecatory plea is almost entirely lost in the specific panegyric or denunciation which is based on our common moral experience. I cannot hope in the present series of estimates of Royal persons entirely to remedy this defect in criticism; but, perhaps, something may be achieved in this direction by a few preliminary remarks, and by keeping this peculiarity well in view in exhibiting each of the distinctive points of character.

A King, then, is removed by his peculiar position alike from the support of private friendship, the controlling influence of habitual responsibility to the law, and the habitual safeguard of authorised criticism. In his own country he has no fellow,—in his own family he has no equal,—and among the Princes of other countries he may find a similarity of position, but never an identity of interests. There can be no real reciprocity with him, either in thought or feeling. If he seek to indulge his affections, the difference and inadequacy of any return that can be attempted by their object must tend to degrade the act to *favouritism*. If the feeling displayed is of a more subdued and intellectual type, it cannot escape from the character of

patronage. Whether a wrong be resented, in word or deed, or passed over with a gentle rebuke or patient forgiveness, the course adopted can never have a merely personal character and a personal responsibility. It will always be more or less a public act, liable to be judged by other considerations than those of personal feelings. The act is always too significant, either for good or the reverse. The multitude of *indifferent* and insignificant acts which constitute the greatest part of the lives of ordinary men cannot exist as such with a King. He has always a representative and official character. He cannot act as a private individual, and what is more, he can never *think* as such. His whole view of life and men is affected by this fact. He always looks at other men and at the characteristics of society *ab extra*. He cannot accurately appreciate the personal motives of individuals within that society, or perceive and estimate the gathering forces of society during their noiseless formation. Even if his intellect is of moderate calibre, he estimates generally far better than any ordinary individual the significance and relations to the history of the world of the external features of society, and of palpable results. If he is a man of superior intellect, he may index and summarise the progress of events, and look forward towards great ends from far distant premises. He is not lost in details or led astray by inferior objects. He is naturally the best critic of society as a whole,

and so, as far as its corporate action is concerned, he has to a great degree a prophetic power as to the course of events. But, like the philosophers of social science in modern times, who base everything in history on statistics and the theory of probabilities, his prognostications are frequently belied by the eccentricities of personal character, and the unseen agencies which are operating within the heart of society. He is always peculiarly subject to *surprises*, and is frequently censured for judicial blindness to feelings and movements which have never come within his ken. What he has gained in breadth of vision by being removed from the internal conflicts of society, he has lost in the forecasts of coming events which the daily action of informing opinion brings to the minds of ordinary members of that society. If he is enlightened at all on such points it can never be from his own experience, but from the information of others, and he must always have the additional task and responsibility of estimating the value of this information with very imperfect materials for his judgment. How is the enlightened warning of the true prophet to be distinguished in such cases from the interested misrepresentation of selfish ambition?

Another of the results of this terrible isolation of Royalty is that a King can hardly be otherwise than *selfish*,—using the term in its widest and least invidious sense. Unselfishness is based on sympathy,

and his sympathy must be more or less imperfect, for the difficulty of realising the position and feelings of others must be in his case vastly increased; and self-sacrifice, which is always to some extent involved in the true act of sympathy, is with him almost impossible. His position *requires* him always to think of *himself* in the first place, and however noble may be the real nature of the man, and however kindly and generous his natural instincts, the conditions of his life must warp his disposition, and make him (often quite unconsciously), in however slight a degree, postpone the feelings of others to his own wishes and necessities. To judge a man thus placed as we should other men, and to pass on his acts the decided and unreserved sentence of condemnation which would be justly called forth in their case, is therefore manifestly unjust. There is a sense, indeed, higher than is conveyed by the vulgar doctrine of *Right Divine*, in which Kings can be only responsible to God,—for the laws of justice, as applicable to other men, cannot fairly be applied to them; and it is some confused feeling of this virtual immunity from ordinary law which has given rise, no doubt, to the popular superstition as to the divinity which hedges in a King.

Where the actions of a King are not extreme either for good or evil, the considerations arising from these peculiarities of his position must render any decided opinion on his real character very

difficult. In most cases, however, the balance is so much inclined one way or the other, that the allowance to be made for his peculiar position will not affect the general positive result, and we may speak with some decision as to the main features of his character, without incurring much danger of doing injustice either to him or to the truth.

The special conditions of the life of Kings are, of course, externally at least, greatly modified by the differing circumstances of time and place. The Eastern despot and the absolute and constitutional princes of the West must have, necessarily, inherent differences of consciousness and corresponding grades of responsibility. But fundamentally, the same stern laws of isolation exist with respect to all, whenever the position they hold is a permanent one, and whenever they form part of a distinct Royal caste. So also with respect to the conditions imposed by the successive stages of civilisation in national life. In earlier and ruder times there must be less mystery and more self-assertion in the Kingly office, and the Royal *status* may be so precarious and brief in its tenure that the incidents of a separate caste may scarcely attach to it, and in periods of transition from one stage of society to another, when the old foundations are overthrown, and there has been no time to consolidate the new —where *Founders* of dynasties and systems take the

place of a Royal caste and of a traditionary *status*, the conditions of this isolation must be materially affected. But the position of a *Founder*, or, as the old lawyers called him, a *Conquestor* or *Conqueror*, while it implies something more and something less than that of an ordinary hereditary King, does not imply the non-existence of the social conditions of a *caste*. He may have emerged from conditions of life differing very widely from those of his new position, and he will always possess on that account an immunity from some at least of the disabilities which enter into the Royal isolation; but he will also be more profoundly impressed by the specialities of his new life, the weight and burden of which will be doubly felt from their novelty, and the close bondage of which will force itself all the more keenly on his perception, because he must ever be on his guard against any relaxation of this self-imposed restraint. To pass into a life of isolation must be more painful than to be born into and grow up in it, and some of the characteristics of which we have spoken may become even exaggerated in the actuating feelings of a *Founder*. The problem of character is in his case more complicated and more interesting, but much at least of *the* speciality of Royalty must enter into the *rationale* of its solution. It will generally be a strong man who can acquire such a position as that of *the* ancestor of a line of Kings; it must be a still stronger man who can endure this changed life, and

preserve through it some stamp, however faint, of *moral* greatness; and such a man, conceding the worst that has been said against him, was WILLIAM THE BASTARD, the *Founder* or *Conqueror* of the Anglo-Norman Monarchy. He was not a good man, and, with all his success, he was not a happy man; but he was too great a man to be an absolutely wicked man, and the awe with which he inspired all around him was saved from becoming hate by a mastering consciousness of the presence of something good in his nature and a suspicion of possible good in his ultimate purpose. If I can give my readers any clearer idea of the character of such a man, they and I may go beyond or differ from his contemporaries in the minute analysis of his character; but we shall certainly not exceed them, or find ourselves at variance with them in their half-avowed instincts of it as a whole.

The details of the early life of William the Bastard are wrapped in considerable obscurity, but the leading points of the story are beyond dispute. He was the son of Robert, Duke, or rather Count, of Normandy, who was the second son of the great-grandson of the legendary founder of the dukedom of countship—*Hrolfr*, *Rolf*, or *Rollo*. It is also certain that he was a base-born child in more than the ordinary sense of the term. His mother, variously called Harlette, Herleva, or Arlette, was the daughter of a tanner of Falaise. The social

impediment in the minds of the great men of Normandy to the succession of William to his father's seat could hardly have been the fact of his being born out of wedlock, for illegitimacy was not the exception, but the rule, in the House of Rollo. No adequate explanation has yet been given of the intensity of the feeling against William's illegitimacy, though the position of a tanner was probably peculiarly low and socially degrading. We know too little of the feelings of those times, and of the particulars of Count Robert's relations with Harlette, to enable us to understand the exact nature of the feeling outraged by William's succession. But we know that it was violently and indignantly scornful among high and low in the more Teutonic and Norse portion of his dominions, and that nothing could have saved the child from destruction but very skilful management on the part of his guardians (backed, perhaps, by a recollection of the personal popularity of Robert), the discord and mutual jealousies among his cousins of the Ducal House and of the conflicting races of Normandy, and, perhaps, the general preference among the turbulent barons for a minority rather than the strong government of a prince of mature age. William, then, was exposed from the first to a storm of social obloquy, and deprived of the peculiar prestige and advantages of the ruling caste, within which he was nevertheless included, and to whose destiny of solitude he was at

the same time subjected. He was, therefore, from the first thrown back on personal resources and the peculiarities of his own mind. The social excommunication against which he was always struggling placed him to some extent from the first in what I have endeavoured to explain as the peculiar position of a Founder, with the important difference, however, that instead of trying to secure his introduction into the Sovereign caste, he was striving to prevent his exclusion from it, and that consequently the basis of his pretensions was a presumptive *status*, not an acquired authority. His feelings must have been akin to those of an heir whose legitimate succession was imperilled, rather than those of an aspirant whose claims were disputed. The stain of his birth may have given him some greater perception of the life of common men than falls to the lot of purely legitimate princes, but as far as his *disposition* was affected by it, it would enhance rather than diminish the caste feeling within him. From the few facts preserved to us, he seems to have led from his cradle a life of hairbreadth escapes and constant anxiety. *When* his strong, skilful hand was first felt at the helm, and *how* he guided the course of the vessel, is really quite unknown. We find him first an almost helpless and hopeless boy, surrounded with enemies; and next, as a calm, self-assured ruler, crushing insurrection at home, and not only maintaining himself against foreign princes, but

making himself respected and dreaded by them. At *Val-ès-Dunes* he made use of the House of Capet to crush the insurgent Norse or Teutonic chieftains of the Cotentin and the old Saxon Shore about Bayeaux; and then he beat back and humbled the French King by employing against him this once rebellious array. Men seemed to be compelled to do his will, apart from and even against their own interests. Nor was it over men of feeble hands and poor intellects that this ascendancy of William's was gained. He triumphed over fierce races, who to the last fretted under his rule, but who were drawn irresistibly in the wake of his successful career; and over strong, self-willed men, who were compelled to follow him because he made this the only path to their personal aggrandisement. He never identified his own personal interests with those of any man or any connection, but he compelled these to identify themselves with his objects. His attitude was the same in this respect both in State and Church. The Church served him well in some of his greatest needs, and it was always a powerful political instrument in his hands. He rewarded it richly, he endeavoured to raise its character, and aggrandised it, by making its machinery more effective for great ends. But even Hildebrand did not dare to more than faintly urge on this generous son of the Church ecclesiastical pretensions which would have inverted their relative positions, and

made the Pope the patron instead of the patronised. He held his dominions from God, and by his own sword, was the sharp retort of William, and the great ruler of the Church, before whom the rest of Catholic Europe had been made to bow in implicit deference, patiently acquiesced in this curt refusal. William sought in all directions for wise counsellors and able agents of his policy, but he never allowed any one to make himself necessary to his service or an irremovable support to his throne. The most dangerous competitor against whom he was ever pitted was perhaps the strong-hearted and crafty son of Godwine, yet the battle of Hastings was but the culmination of a series of intellectual defeats which he had inflicted on the greatest of the Saxons. William's claims on the English Crown were of the most worthless character, and his partisans in England of the most insignificant value in point of numbers and influence. Harold was little, if at all, inferior to the Norman as a soldier; he had a strong hold on the affections of a considerable portion of the English nation, and he was certainly preferred by the great majority in the island to the Norman invader. Yet William had routed him thoroughly in the moral opinion of Europe before he vanquished him on the battle-field, and the paralysis of the Anglo-Saxon energies which opened up the conquest of England to William was due far more to the skilful manipulation by the Norman of the pre-

liminaries of the contest, than to any distraction of forces caused by a double invasion in the north and south, or even any divisions of race. Though there was scarcely ever a Sovereign whose actions were more strictly *personal* in their character than William's, there was no one who managed more completely to give them an aspect of legal and social authority. His most violent acts of personal revenge and ruthless fury never seem to have struck his contemporaries in the same light as did the atrocities of the men among whom he lived. Either there was a purpose evident to them and not to us which relieved their revolting features, or the man himself had become to them an institution rather than an individual, and they accepted his acts as a necessity of his and their existence rather than as an expression of personal motives on his part. The necessities of his early career had made him an assertor of order, and the isolation of his own interests had made him, as respects the mutual relations of other men, a comparatively impartial administrator. His long-enduring patience (engendered also by his early necessities), and yet his uncompromising fierceness in enforcing his ultimate decisions, had something of the slowness and sureness of fate, and impressed even the sufferers with only an uncertain sense of oppression. He was eminently a Founder, for he really laid the foundation and shaped the general outline of the subsequent

social and political life of England; but he possessed the peculiarity of great Founders of never making himself in outward profession the ultimate source of these institutions. They professed to be little more than adaptations of earlier codes to the wants and necessities of the existing age. Thus he secured an indefinite amount of traditional authority for what would otherwise have been criticised with all the keenness attaching to personal responsibility. Though everybody and everything felt the impress of his personal action and will, he never appeared but as the promulgator of the legislation of Alfred and Edward the Confessor. While he never allowed anything or anybody to interfere with his personal will or to dispute his personal position, he was entirely free from the poor vanity of weaker self-willed men—of parading their *personal* pretensions and abilities.

Perhaps, even with our imperfect knowledge, some mitigating or explanatory points may be discerned in the worst actions of the Conqueror, which may redeem them from the charge of blind fury or deliberate malignity. Whatever may have been the amount of injustice inflicted by him on individuals—and it would be going very far indeed to assert his justice or wisdom in these instances—it is a fact that not one of those whose cases have met with most commiseration and excited most indignation against him can come forward with a clean and unblemished

reputation. There is always a considerable possibility if not of probability that they were in the wrong also in the cause for which they suffered. This may have been William's good fortune or his policy, but it must have made all the difference in the estimate formed by contemporaries of the justice or injustice of his conduct. Whatever our patriotic sympathies and our hatred of oppression, it is not easy to pin one's faith on the probity of such men as Waltheof, the chiefs of the house of Leofric, or the great Norman barons who experienced the vengeance or justice of William. Men talked suspiciously of the death of Conan of Brittany, but modern criticism has thrown great doubt on the imputation that he was poisoned by the Norman prince. The atrocious cruelties on the inhabitants of Alençon are quite indefensible, but were not exceptional cruelties in those days, and had a strong provocation and probably a political motive. The desolation of the Northern counties of England was a great crime, but it was also a political act of defence against Scandinavia and Scotland, and may imply much less of conscious malignity and have proceeded from less cruelty of *disposition* than we should at first conceive. The Northumbrians, rude and wild in their acts as they were, had a vivid and deep-rooted attachment to a former state of things—an attachment unto death to a traditionary system quite apart from that into which the Conqueror was reorganising England;

and the Northumbrians, though far nobler in themselves than many other of the opponents whom he encountered, were destroyed by him because they were quite incompatible with his ascendancy in England.

There are personal relations which, however modified by the peculiar position of Kings, still even in their case give us a greater insight into the man than anything else possibly can. A marriage, indeed, may be a merely conventional form, and the relations between husband and wife may differ little from the other ceremonial apparatus of royalty, but even a King's relations with his children must always give us some insight into his natural disposition. If no one is a hero to his own valet, few, if any, can be altogether mere impersonations of law and will to their own children. The province of the legislator stops here,—the arm of the administrator is arrested, and something of the individual feelings, though often but little of the intellectual sagacity, of the man is here made apparent. But we do not care about a display of intellect here, when that is so strongly marked in other relations. In an age of gross dissoluteness, it is now understood that William stands unimpugned in the point of conjugal fidelity. It is also held to be established by evidence that he was not only fortunate in, but happy with, his wife, Matilda of Flanders. Of those sons who alone played any public part, it is known that Robert,

the eldest, was least the favourite of his father, and that the affections of the latter were concentrated on William and Henry. Unlike many strong fathers, then, he did not prefer the weaker nature in his sons. But neither can it be said that he was substantially unjust to that weaker son. Young Robert, indeed, rose in rebellion again and again, on the specious plea that the *government* of Normandy was kept out of his hands, after it had been, implicitly at least, promised to him. But no one will blame William's conduct in this respect who sees how the character of the vain, frivolous prince developed itself; and the repeated forgiveness which he extended to him had much of the contemptuous pity and forbearance of his treatment of Edgar, the Anglo-Saxon Etheling, and contrasts with his firmness on the main point in which the interest of the State was concerned.

To conclude—the reserve and suspicion of others fostered in William by his early trials led him to keep his thoughts, and plans, and reasons for his actions within his own breast; and as he made no confidants, and explained himself to no one, it is not surprising that his motives were frequently misconstrued, even where there was a latent feeling that his administration was not fundamentally unjust. This makes it almost impossible to harmonise what contemporary critics assert against him with what they admit in his favour, and the praise and the

blame seem alike arbitrary. Yet, perhaps, with all this inconsistency, and want of comprehensiveness in grasp, there has never been a more impressive character drawn of a conqueror by one of the conquered than that by the contemporary Anglo-Saxon chronicler of William the Bastard; and modern philosophy, though it may attempt to solve some of the psychological riddles which it presents, can add nothing to the reality of its life-like touches. 'If any one desires to know what kind of man he was,' says the chronicler, 'or what worship he had, or of how many lands he was lord, then we will write of him so as we understood him, who have looked on him, and at another time sojourned in his Court. The King William about whom we speak was a very wise man, and very powerful, more dignified and strong than any of his predecessors were. He was mild to the good men who loved God; and over all measure severe to the men who gainsayed his will. On the same stead on which God granted him that he might subdue England, he raised a noble monastery, and there placed monks, and well endowed it. In his days was the noble monastery at Canterbury built, and also very many others over all England. The land was also plentifully supplied with monks, and they lived their lives after the rule of St. Benedict. And in his day Christianity was such that every man who could followed what belonged to his condition. He was also very dignified; thrice every

year he bare his crown as oft as he was in England. At Easter he bare it in Winchester; at Pentecost in Westminster; at midwinter in Gloucester. And there were with him all the great men over all England, archbishops and suffragan bishops, abbots and earls, thanes and knights. So was he also a very rigid and cruel man, so that no one durst do anything against his will. He had earls in his bonds, who had acted against his will; bishops he cast from their bishoprics, and abbots from their abbaies, and thanes into prison, and at last he spared not his own brother, named Odo. . . . Among other things, is not to be forgotten the good peace that he made in this land; so that a man who in himself was aught might go over his realm with his bosom full of gold unhurt. Nor durst any man slay another man, had he done ever so great evil to the other. He reigned over England, and by his sagacity so thoroughly surveyed it, that there was not a hide of land within England that he knew not who had it, and what it was worth, and afterwards set it in his writ. . . . Certainly in his time men had great hardship and very many injuries. Castles he caused to be made, and poor men to be greatly oppressed. The King was very rigid, and took from his subjects many a mark of gold, and more hundred pounds of silver, which he took by right and with great unright from his people, for little need. He had fallen into covetousness, and altogether loved greediness. He

planted a great preserve for deer, and he laid down laws therewith, that whosoever should slay hart or hind should be blinded. He forbade the harts and also the boars to be killed. As greatly did he love the tall deer as if he were their father. He also ordained concerning the hares that they should go free. His great men bewailed it, and the poor men murmured thereat; but he was so obdurate that he recked not of the hatred of them all; but they must closely follow the King's will, if they would live or have land or property, or even his peace. Alas! that any man should be so proud, and raise himself up, and account himself above all men! May the Almighty God show mercy to his soul, and grant him forgiveness of his sins! These things we have written concerning him, both good and evil, that good men may imitate their goodness, and wholly flee from the evil, and go in the way that leads us to the kingdom of heaven.'

WILLIAM 'RUFUS.'

THE sons of a Founder, if more favoured generally than he was in the starting-part of their career, are also exposed to some disadvantages. If their position has been to a great extent made for them, it by no means follows that the task of retaining it will be an easy one; and the comparison with their predecessor will in most cases be disadvantageously invidious to their abilities. If it takes three generations to make a gentleman, it certainly takes quite as long to render a sovereignty assured. Rarely, too, is genius hereditary in an immediately succeeding generation, and even where it is at all equal in amount, it is usually very dissimilar in character; the result being that contemporaries miss the sort of ability to which they have been accustomed more than they appreciate that which they have newly acquired. And the circumstances of the case forbid that the conditions under which the character and disposition of the Founder were formed or modified should be the same with his successor, even were that character and disposition originally cast in the same mould. Thus it may be

possible that had the positions of the father and son been reversed, the character which developed itself in each might have been reversed also. In the instance before us, this could scarcely have been the case, but there was nevertheless a strong family likeness between the Conqueror and his second surviving son, William. This is partially admitted, even by those (and in the case of William Rufus there is no friendly exception) who decry him in every other respect. There was something of the same greatness of stamp —magnanimity, they phrased it—and of the same kingly self-reliance which eminently characterised the First William. On one occasion, while besieging his brother Henry in Mont St. Michel, being unhorsed by the bursting of the girths of his saddle, he exposed himself to great personal danger in securing it; and when his knights jested with him on the inadequacy of the motive, 'By the holy face of Lucca,' he replied, 'one must be able to defend one's own! It would be shameful to lose it as long as one could defend it. The Bretons would have bragged prettily with my saddle!' In another encounter he was unhorsed by a soldier, who was preparing to strike him, when William exclaimed, 'Stop, rascal! I am the King of England!' The soldiers, overawed, raised him from the ground, and brought him another horse. 'Which of you,' he cried, 'struck me down?' A soldier stood forward, and said, 'It was I: I took you for a knight, not for the King.' To which

William rejoined, 'By the holy face of Lucca, thou shalt henceforth be mine, and, entered on my roll, shalt receive the recompense of praiseworthy bravery.'

When Hélie of Maine fell into his hands, William said to him jestingly, 'I have you, master!' To which Hélie haughtily replied, 'You have taken me by chance; if I could escape, I know what I would do.' At this, William, seizing Hélie, exclaimed passionately, 'You scoundrel! and what would you do? Begone, depart, fly! I give you leave to do whatever you can; and by the holy face of Lucca, if you should conquer me, I will ask no return for this favour.' 'Nor,' continues William, the Monk of Malmesbury, 'did he falsify his word, but immediately suffered him to escape, rather admiring than following the fugitive.' Hélie was not disarmed by the magnanimity of the King. He raised fresh forces, and pressed hard the siege of the city of Mans. William was in England, engaged in hunting when the news reached him. 'Unprepared as he was,' says William of Malmesbury, 'he turned his horse instantly, and shaped his journey to the sea. When his nobles reminded him that it would be necessary to call out his troops, and put them in array, "I shall see," said he, "who will follow me. Do you think that I shall not have people enough? If I know the temper of the young men of my kingdom, they will even brave shipwreck to come to me." In this manner he arrived, almost unattended, at the sea-coast. The sky

at that time was overcast, the wind contrary, and a tempest swept the surface of the deep. When he determined to embark directly, the sailors besought him to wait till the storm should subside and the wind be favourable. "Why," said William, "I have never heard of a King perishing by shipwreck; no, weigh anchor immediately, and you shall see the elements conspire to obey me." When the report of his having crossed the sea reached the besiegers they hastily retreated.' 'Who,' exclaims William of Malmesbury, 'could believe this of an unlettered man? And perhaps there may be some persons, who, from reading Lucan, may falsely suppose that William borrowed these examples from Julius Cæsar; but he had neither inclination nor leisure to attend to learning; it was rather the innate warmth of his temper and his conscious valour which prompted him to such expressions.' After all, notwithstanding the monk's scorn of his ignorance, the pupil of Lanfranc may not have quite forgotten his old master's lessons from the Classics.

Nor was William the Second inferior to his father in energy and strength of will. The Conqueror must have known this, or he would scarcely have committed to his charge the difficult task of sustaining the ascendancy of his dynasty in England. Normandy he was obliged by the force of public opinion there to leave to Robert, but he doubtless felt that William, with the resources of England at his back, would ere long

reunite the two principalities. Yet it was no easy task that he bequeathed to his second son. The separation of Normandy from England, while it inflicted a severe blow on the pride of the Normans on both sides of the Channel, by restoring the independence of England, made the position of those who held lands in both countries very difficult and precarious. Their allegiance must in any case be a divided one, and in the probable event of a struggle between the two brothers, their possessions on one side of the Channel or the other were sure to be, at first at any rate, confiscated by him whom they opposed. The Anglo-Norman barons, too, were very different in their *status* in England, when they lived there as foreign conquerors, with homes and resources in a foreign land, from what they became when they had to rely on their own resources, and hold their own as they best could, as one among several rival races which inhabited the same island, and which might be balanced or neutralised by a combination of the others with the Executive.* So during nearly the whole of his reign Rufus had to contend for his life as well as his throne against incessant conspiracies of the Norman barons, and it was only by the aid of the Anglo-Danish population, and by carrying the war into the Norman home of his rebellious vassals, that he was able to maintain himself at all. But he did so, and not only crushed every rebellion at home and secured and enlarged his borders in the British

island, but gradually ousted Robert from the possession of Normandy itself, in defiance of the efforts of the French King and his allies in Anjou and Maine. The cession of the remainder of the duchy by Robert for a sum of money restored the old state of things so far that the principalities were reunited under one rule; but there was the important difference, that it was now a King of England who had annexed Normandy, instead of a Duke of Normandy having conquered England. As with his father, neither king, nor noble, nor race could stand against Rufus's will. His able brother Henry tried his hand against him, but failed. His Norman barons found they were not an essential basis of his authority. His Anglo-Danish subjects found they were used by the King as instruments against their common enemies, but had gained nothing but a restored sense of national dignity. As a class they were as oppressed and degraded as ever. The Church shared the fate of the State. The bishops either became his pliant tools, or were compelled to abandon the field to him. The Court of Rome had to conciliate him, and waive its pretensions, just as in the case of his father. Here were strength and energy and success enough, one would think, to constitute a great prince in the eyes of his contemporaries. Yet we do not find the idea of greatness attaching itself to the memory of William Rufus, as it did to that of his father; and though as much feared and more hated, he was never in the

same manner respected. While, in the case of the Conqueror, admiration and awe swallowed up hatred, in the case of Rufus admiration and fear were absorbed in a loathing antipathy. Considering the general standard of morals at that time, there is nothing specifically told of Rufus which can in itself account for the horror which he seems to have inspired. We know, indeed, that there was no love lost between him and the monks, and that the latter in their chronicles brought out his vices in strong relief, instead of softening and brightening the picture, as in their characters of other persons who were benefactors of the Church. Rufus hated the monks, and, while lavish of his money, gave the monasteries little or nothing, and they in return chronicled his vices in full; but such men as the Monk of Malmesbury and Ordericus Vitalis were not wilful calumniators, and they have probably told us little that is not true, though their account is a spitefully minute register of evil. William evidently did inspire them, and most of his contemporaries, with an overpowering feeling of something transcendantly evil. What, then, were the sources of this peculiar antipathy?

In the first place, the administration of Rufus, though firm and, as a whole, self-consistent, had all the character in its specific acts of personal violence and irregularity. The King could will great ends, and achieve them as completely as the greatest ad-

ministrator could have done, but he could not act with sustained dignity. His nature really lacked the solidity and substance of that of his father. Even a kingly bearing did not seem to be inherent in him, but only an occasional or assumed feature. There was something strange and eccentric in his appearance, which might alarm but did not impress men. He was strongly built, though not tall, and somewhat corpulent. To his florid complexion and yellow hair he is indebted for his epithet of *Rufus*. His countenance was open; but he 'had different-coloured eyes, varying with certain glittering specks,' and he hesitated much in speaking, especially when angry. His strange, staring, yet uncertain expression was aggravated by a trick which he had, when abroad or in public assemblies, of putting on 'a supercilious look, darting his threatening eye on the bystanders, and with assumed severity and ferocious voice assailing such as conversed with him.' While he was thus playing the stage-tyrant in public, he often lowered his real dignity in private by another practice. 'At home and at table with his intimate companions, he gave loose to levity and to mirth. He was a most facetious railer at anything he had himself done amiss, in order that he might thus do away obloquy and make it matter of jest.' If I am correct in my conjecture, with a jealous pride in his royal position, he fretted more than most princes at the isolation and monotony of royalty. Naturally an *insouciant*

man of the world, of considerable personal ability, with a keen sense of the ridiculous and a thorough contempt for the conventional, strong sensual passions, a craving for unrestrained social intercourse, and considerable personal vanity, he felt himself checked at every point by the necessities and trammels of his royal position, and sought relief for this unendurable restraint in eccentricity and buffoonery. How far he was really unlike other men, and to what extent his opinions and his views really went, it is impossible to say, for there can be no doubt that he took pleasure in exaggerating his natural tendencies, and in outraging and shocking all the proprieties of decent society and common-place men. He wished to give the impression of originality and independence, but the outside world, both the foolish and the wise, resented the outrage on their feelings or the insult to their understanding. With all the pride of royalty, he was wanting in its reserve and decorum, and society outside resented his intrusion into the private sphere as a swaggerer and a jester. His acts lost the prestige and weight of the impersonal administrator, and were criticised and resented as the fancies of an individual. To make up for this want of inherent authority, he had to call to his aid an increased amount of severity and violence, and he threw into this all the peculiarities and eccentricities of his own character. His acts were often conceived in the spirit of a King, but they were carried out in

the personal fashion of William Rufus. So, while by a strong will he generally accomplished his purpose, he left behind him a sense of outraged law and of personal injustice.

Closely connected with the preceding peculiarity, and partly explaining and partly explained by it, is his freedom of thought and speech on points on which even the present age is nervously sensitive. To say that William Rufus was an unbeliever in God and religion would be probably going too far, but he certainly looked on them in a manner quite different from all the conventional ideas of the age. I have little doubt there was much of similar free-thinking among the great nobles of his time, but the royal isolation of William made it possible to realise and avow these sentiments in a manner which was impossible for any member of society at large. I have no doubt he believed thoroughly in the existence and power of God,—beyond this he probably believed nothing. He had a thorough hatred and contempt for all the human apparatus of religion, and was disposed to stand on his own rights as King and Man even against Deity itself. He acknowledged that he was responsible to God, if to no one else; but he had also a curious feeling of the responsibility of God Himself to certain paramount rules of justice and injustice, to which they both owed allegiance. Perhaps he regarded God as his *Suzerain*, just as he himself was the *Suzerain* of his great nobles, and

they again the immediate lords of their own vassals. But his *Suzerain* must not do him wrong, any more than *he* ought to do wrong to that *Suzerain*. This may sound very like impiety to many, but to Rufus it probably really meant something very different, though doubtless he took a malicious but foolish pleasure in enunciating it in the most offensive form, in order to horrify both clerk and layman. He looked upon virtue or abstinence from vice as a sort of feudal *aid* due by him to God as his Suzerain, and to be withheld if he had cause of grievance against Him, and had renounced temporarily his allegiance, as it was to be evaded as much as possible in the ordinary state of things. When during a severe illness he was led through the fear of death to choose an Archbishop, he chose the one who appeared to be forced on him by the hand of God, and whom he regarded as the nominee of his irresistible Suzerain; but he resented the necessity and the imposition all the same, and when the danger was over, and the zealous but injudicious Archbishop urged on him to live more in conformity with the will of God, his strange creed broke forth in the startling rejoinder,—'Hear, Bishop, by the holy face of Lucca, the Lord shall find no good one in me for all the evil He has inflicted on me!' After this we read without surprise that William said (in jest, the pious monk of Malmesbury tried to believe), that if the Jews mastered the Christian Bishops in open argument he would become one of their sect.

'The question, therefore,' continues the chronicler, 'was agitated with much apprehension on the part of the bishops and clergy, fearful through pious anxiety for the Christian faith. From this contest, however, the Jews reaped nothing but confusion; though they used repeatedly to boast that they were vanquished not by argument, but by power.'

A man who could talk thus of God, and could act thus with regard to the Jews, might well inspire a peculiar horror in clergy and laymen alike. Certainly, however, if he chose to convert his illness and the consequent choice of Anselm as Archbishop of Canterbury into an act of oppression on the part of the Almighty, the King had some reason in the years that followed to deplore his constrained act. No greater act of penance and mortification of the spirit could he have inflicted on himself than he did in making such a man his yokefellow in the government of England. Anselm himself compared their coupling to that of a wild and untamed ox with a meek and powerless sheep; but the King could have told a different story as to the inoffensiveness of the gentler animal. Any good man always at his side to admonish him must have been an annoyance to such a man as Rufus, but there is no good adviser so irritating as a mild and conscientious ecclesiastic, with a strong sense of his duty, an equally strong faculty of persistence and as little amount of delicacy and tact. He is too good and well-disposed a man

to be treated as an enemy; he is too mild a man to be repulsed with violence; he is too impersonal and representative a man to be quarrelled with as other men; he is a priest, and therefore thinks himself entitled to lay down the rule of right and wrong; he is an officer of the Church, and therefore cannot believe himself to be mistaken. Never is the cause of virtue and right in greater peril than in such hands. In dealing with such a man vice may become only a form of self-assertion, and virtue an abnegation of self-respect and a badge of slavery. Such a monitor might provoke a saint; he will scarcely convert a sinner. And so William, the pupil of the statesman Lanfranc, became worse and worse under the spiritual admonitions of the priest Anselm, and the repulsion to his precepts outlasted the presence of the preceptor. Anselm retired to the Continent, in despair or exhaustion, from his long contest against both the vices and the laws of England; but William continued to sink lower and lower in morality and self-respect, till an arrow in the New Forest—by whom or wherefore aimed has never been ascertained—put an end to the career of the strong-willed son of the Conqueror, who, in the words of the chronicler, 'feared God but little—man not at all.'

HENRY THE FIRST.

If the praise of friendly monks is a true certificate of goodness and greatness, there can be no question as to the character of Henry the First. Their panegyric is as absolute as in the case of his brother Rufus their condemnation is downright. The Anglo-Saxon chronicler, whose sympathies are divided between the common people and the Church, sums up the character of King Henry in the following emphatic words: 'A good man he was, and there was great awe of him. No man dared misdo against another in his time. He made peace for man and beast. Whoso bore his burthen of gold and silver, no man dared say to him aught but good.' The Monk of Malmesbury is more discriminating in his praise, but not less decided. 'He was active,' he says, 'in providing what would be beneficial to his empire; firm in defending it; abstinent from war, as far as he could with honour, but when he had determined no longer to forbear, a most severe requiter of injuries, dissipating every opposing danger by the energy of his courage; constant in enmity or in affec-

tion towards all; giving too much indulgence to the tide of anger in the one, gratifying his royal magnanimity in the other; depressing his enemies, indeed, even to despair, and exalting his friends and dependents to an enviable condition. For philosophy propounds this to be the first or greatest concern of a good King,—

To spare the suppliant, but beat down the proud.

Inflexible in the administration of justice, he ruled the people with moderation, the nobility with condescension. Seeking after robbers and counterfeiters with the greatest diligence, and punishing them when discovered, neither was he by any means negligent in matters of lesser importance. . . . In the beginning of his reign, that he might awe the delinquents by the terror of example, he was most inclined to punish by deprivation of limb; afterwards by mulct. Thus, in consequence of the rectitude of his conduct, as is natural to men, he was venerated by the nobility, and beloved by the common people. . . . Nor, indeed, was he ever singled out for the attack of treachery, by reason of the rebellion of any of his nobles, through means of his attendants, except once. . . . With this exception, secure during his whole life, the minds of all were restrained by fear, their conversation by regard for him. He was of middle stature, exceeding the diminutive, but exceeded by the very tall; his hair was

black, but scanty near the forehead; his eyes mildly bright; his chest brawny; his body fleshy; he was facetious in proper season, nor did multiplicity of business cause him to be less pleasant when he mixed in society. Not prone to personal combat, he verified the saying of Scipio Africanus, 'My mother bore me a commander, not a soldier;' wherefore he was inferior in wisdom to no King of modern time, and as I may almost say, he clearly surpassed all his predecessors in England, and preferred contending by counsel rather than by the sword. If he could, he conquered without bloodshed; if it was unavoidable, with as little as possible. He was free during his whole life from impure desires, for as we have learned from those who were well informed, he was led by female blandishments, not for the gratification of an intimacy, but for the sake of issue . . . . in this respect the master of his natural inclinations, not the passive slave of lust. He was plain in his diet, rather satisfying the calls of hunger than surfeiting himself by variety of delicacies. He never drank but to allay thirst; execrating the least departure from temperance, both in himself and in those about him. . . . His eloquence was rather unpremeditated than laboured; not rapid, but deliberate. His piety towards God is laudable, for he built monasteries in England and in Normandy.' Henry of Huntingdon, writing towards the close of the reign of Stephen, gives us an impartial summary

of the public opinion respecting King Henry at his death, and a plausible explanation of the change which subsequent events wrought in this estimate. 'On the death of the great King Henry, his character was freely canvassed by the people, as is usual after men are dead. Some contended that he was eminently distinguished for three brilliant gifts. These were,—*great sagacity*, for his counsels were profound, his foresight keen, and his eloquence commanding; *success in war*, for, besides other splendid achievements, he was victorious over the King of France; and *wealth*, in which he far surpassed all his predecessors. Others, however taking a different view, attributed to him three gross vices,—*avarice*, as, though his wealth was great, in imitation of his progenitors he impoverished the people by taxes and exactions, entangling them in the toils of informers; *cruelty*, in that he plucked out the eyes of his prisoner, the Earl of Mortain, in his captivity, though the horrid deed was unknown until death revealed the King's secrets; and they mentioned other instances of which I will say nothing; and *wantonness*, for, like Solomon, he was perpetually enslaved by female seductions. Such remarks were freely bruited abroad. But in the troublesome times which succeeded from the atrocities of the Normans, whatever King Henry had done, either despotically or in the regular exercise of his royal authority, appeared, in comparison, most excellent.'

When, with these contemporary estimates before our eyes, we approach the consideration of the character of Henry, one of the first things which will strike us is that *caution*, the quality which in the Conqueror blended with and controlled his naturally fierce and fiery temper, was in his youngest son exalted into the leading characteristic, to which all other considerations, however influential in their various degrees, gave place. This was indeed the very backbone running through the whole of Henry's character, and to which every part of it had some reference. His mind was one of considerable breadth, and his *caution* ranged through every grade of the quality, from the wisest foresight and painful self-denial down to actual physical and moral timidity, and was exemplified in corresponding varieties of policy, from sagacious watchfulness and well-timed action down to low and deceitful cunning. This predominating characteristic led to curious inconsistencies in his conduct. Not only the necessities of his early career and actual position, but the consciousness of possessing greater mental gifts, and deeper insight into men than most of those among whom he lived, should have tended to make him self-reliant and self-assured. Yet, on the other hand, his very foresight and intuition as to men and human contingencies made him ever, under the impulse of the over-ruling feeling, anxious to excess as to possibilities, and self-distrustful as to his

chances of realising his wishes. He conceived great ideas and, in the main, adhered to them; he did not shrink from encountering any difficulties or any adversaries in the execution of his plans; but he exaggerated the greatness and importance of probable difficulties and dangers, and of possible opponents, and took unnecessary trouble to meet the one and conciliate the other. He was afraid even to give his own deliberate and cherished policy full development, and often took refuge in a compromise or subterfuge when he might have achieved great results and a greater reputation by a bolder course. Just as his contemporaries noticed that he avoided as much as possible direct conflicts in war, so in policy he rarely, if it were possible to escape from so doing, met his opponents fairly front to front, even where success was tolerably assured. He preferred to break the line of opposition by some adroit flank movement, some entire change in the disposition of his forces, some abandonment of direct principle, in order to secure indirectly and in another way a decided practical gain, however limited. He was too wise and resolute in the main to be other than a strong and successful ruler; he was *too* prudent to attain to the highest type of statesmanship, of which a wise audacity is one of the constituent elements.

The tortuous means to which his over-subtle caution often led him to resort sometimes endangered the success of some of his most cherished projects.

For a considerable time the little county of Anjou had exercised an influence on European affairs quite out of proportion to its size and natural resources. Of the family which governed it, and to the remarkable abilities of successive members of which it owed this anomalous position of greatness, I shall have more to say hereafter. It is enough at present to observe that they impressed with equal apprehension of their rising influence the great Conqueror, the fearless Rufus, and the calculating Henry. All alike sought to disarm their hostility by conciliation rather than force, though the Conqueror at least never shrank from a violent collision with them when absolutely necessary. But on the mind of Henry the importance of making friends of the Angevin rulers was ever present as a paramount consideration. He saw quite as clearly as his father had done that as long as Normandy and Anjou could be pitted against each other the French King could contend with the Anglo-Norman princes at considerable advantage, and preserve his ascendancy in the northern part of France. He determined, therefore, that the two principalities should be united under one rule. The idea was, indeed, to some extent forced upon him by circumstances. His nephew, young William of Normandy, the son of the dispossessed and imprisoned Duke Robert, had (through the influence of the French King) succeeded in obtaining a promise of the hand of Matilda,

daughter of Fulk, Count of Anjou, with Maine as a portion. Henry, alarmed, succeeded by his constant agent, gold, not only in stopping the approaching marriage by an ecclesiastical declaration against it on the ground of too great consanguinity between the parties, but also in getting his own son William affianced to the disappointed bride, with Maine as an immediate possession, and the promise of Anjou being hereafter added. But the death of young William of England baffled this skilful though unprincipled act of diplomacy, and Henry set to work to reweave his political meshes. His own daughter, Matilda, had been married when a child to the Emperor Henry V. of Germany, and had now returned to her father a childless widow, past the flower of her youth. The barons of England had been much averse to the German match, from general dislike of a foreigner, and from fear of an invasion of their estates by a host of new foreign adventurers. They therefore made it a condition of their solemn recognition of the succession of Matilda to her father's crown, that she should not be married again to a foreign prince without their consent. This was but reasonable, and had Henry fairly put before them his newly-formed scheme of marrying Matilda to Geoffrey, the heir of Anjou, a boy of fifteen, he might have experienced some difficulty in overcoming their opposition, owing to their jealousy of Angevin favouritism, but the risk of

a marriage with some more powerful foreign prince would probably ere long have reconciled them to the project. But Henry, as usual, cautiously apprehensive, over-rated this immediate opposition, and resolved rather to over-reach them, and the pledge thus given was followed by the news of the accomplishment of the Angevin marriage. The anger of the barons was great, though they dared not show it openly, but they used it as a pretext after the death of Henry to refuse allegiance to his daughter; and Henry's over-finessing almost brought on the catastrophe if not of a final separation of Normandy as well as Anjou from the English Crown, at any rate of the lasting exclusion of his own descendants from the latter. In the meantime, he reaped a bitter harvest of trouble and anxiety, owing to the quarrels and temporary separation of the ill-assorted and loveless couple. Perhaps this over-caution had something to do also with the more unpleasing side of Henry's character, his cold-blooded cruelties. His two predecessors were both cruel men, but in Rufus, at any rate, this ferocity was relieved by impulsive acts of generous magnanimity. But we find no such highminded forgiveness in Henry. He felt injuries too keenly, and feared their repetition too nervously, to be able (except out of policy) to exhibit generosity to his enemies. We do not lay any stress on the character of the punishments which he inflicted, because, however barbarous, they

were very common in those days; but what are we to think of the pitiless rancour of his conduct towards Luc de la Barre-en-Ouche, a knight who had satirised Henry in songs, and whom (although he was not his vassal, and in spite of the entreaties of the Earl of Flanders) he caused to be blinded, the unfortunate satirist dashing out his own brains in agony during the process. This was not merely cruelty, but pusillanimity. All that can be said for Henry is that he probably felt the satire much more keenly than an unlettered man would have done, and that he abused the power of a King to avenge the animosity of a student. For Henry was by nature and early training a statesman of the closet, and the hatred of such is often more deadly and implacable than that of men in whom incessant action leaves no time for brooding over wrongs.

With defects such as the preceding Henry could not have achieved and maintained the great position which he actually secured, if he had not possessed great and commanding abilities. Those quiet, intelligent eyes, which penetrated through the surface of men and things, held England and Normandy alike in stern control. Though he seemed ordinarily of gentle mood, except when roused to occasional outbursts of ancestral rage, men feared his smiles even more than they did his expressed anger, for they said that he often smiled most on those whose ruin he was meditating. By force and by

guile he crushed and kept under him his turbulent barons, creating a counterpoise to them in men of low extraction, sometimes drawn from the English soil, sometimes from foreign lands; and though his police administration of England may have lacked the incessant vigilance and completeness of that of his father, it was not wanting in vigour or purpose. During a large part of his reign, indeed, as we gather from the frequent complaints of the friendly Anglo-Saxon chronicler, he rather neglected the internal condition of England in his absorption in Continental affairs. His administrative genius had not the ubiquity of his father's. But when he was to some extent relieved from the anxiety on the other side of the Channel, he set himself energetically to work to realise the promises which he had held forth in charters at the beginning of his reign, and every part of the kingdom, and every branch of the government, local as well as imperial, felt the firm touch of his well-directed hand. Men complained, indeed, that he executed the innocent along with the guilty, but it is certain that the idea of an irresistible, presiding executive was re-established in England, and local oppression in many cases sank into a mere memory, lingering about the mouldering castles of the dispossessed nobles. The scholar who could not forgive a satire could be a liberal and discerning patron of learning and genius. Another standard of merit besides that of military prowess and strength

of arm and limb was set up in the land; and ecclesiastics became less famous as churchmen than as men of arts and letters. Ecclesiastical pretensions were kept at bay and temporised with; never practically admitted. Here the student-king encountered the student-priest, and the result was a drawn battle. Anselm, who, in horror or despair of Rufus, had quitted the arena, was first invited back, caressed, cajoled, and used as an instrument of the King's plans and necessities. Then, when the demands of the priest became too exacting, he was threatened and forced into a second exile; then again plied with all the devices of a subtle diplomacy, until the Church and Rome itself were won from his side. And lastly, the Archbishop was compelled to submit to a crafty compromise, which gave up half the points in dispute to the ecclesiastic, but left all the power to the King, robbing the partial victory of all its pleasure to the restored exile, who was then again caressed and soothed into reluctant quiescence and comparative insignificance.

Such was the wise, calculating, anxious, unloved and unloving Henry *Beauclerc*, the Student-King, who feared men not a little, but who made all men fear him still more.

STEPHEN AND MATILDA.

If I were seeking for an illustration of that peculiarity in Royalty which sets it apart in the public eye from other conditions of life, and fences it in with something of a feeling of sanctity, I could find none more apt for my purpose than the case of Stephen of Blois, who, with many of the qualities which are especially kingly, and with others to which few kings have attained, never succeeded in impressing the mind of the nation with the stamp of a king. Brave he was, even to rashness; and he was not only a good soldier, but a skilful general. He had the quick military eye, and prompt military decision. His energy was exhaustless. Wherever opposition raised itself, or danger threatened, he flew like the wind, constantly taking his enemies by surprise, disconcerting elaborate combinations and calculations, and crushing half-executed designs. His perseverance was indomitable, and combined with an elastic spirit supported him through every phase of fortune. He was chivalrous to an extent which marked him out most favourably among the feudal

warriors of that age. The chroniclers who are most attached to the cause of his rival frankly admit his great generosity to his enemies, and the kindliness of his disposition. He carried this so far as to supply the pecuniary necessities of his young rival, Henry of Anjou, without seeking a single advantage in return when he appealed to his chivalry, during an unsuccessful invasion of England. To have ceased to oppose him, or to be at his mercy, was with him a sure recommendation to forgiveness, or to humane and noble treatment. He was courteous and affable to all men, even to an excess of condescension. He had a bright spirit, a genial disposition, and a kindly, if not a warm heart. In short, he was a perfect gentleman of the Continental rather than the Anglo-Norman type, with something in him, too (notwithstanding the imputations on his sincerity), which left the conviction of genuine sympathy and real good intentions towards all men. If the fidelity of men could have been secured by an infinite succession of satisfactory personal interviews, he would have retained, as he won for the moment, every heart to his side. If tranquillity in a kingdom could have been insured by prompt personal repression of overt acts of rebellion against his executive, Stephen would never have been wanting in this respect. If the example of personal abstinence from tyranny and cruelty could have inspired the barons of England with some sense of justice and humanity,

and the common people with an idea of property and of order, Stephen's character would have been an excellent substitute for an exact execution of the best laws of Edward the Confessor. But it was not so. Stephen approached the ideal of a knight *sans peur et sans reproche*, but the men around him, and the society of which he was the nominal guardian, were very little affected by the fact. He was never felt to be a King, and no effort on his part could make him either feel or act as a King. When he became a prisoner in the hands of his enemies, many lamented his imprisonment and demanded the release of their dear lord; but no one seems to have felt the inadequacy of the proposed exchange for him of Robert, Earl of Gloucester, except Robert himself, the son of a king, though base-born. With all his high qualities, he had nothing of the 'awful majesty of kings;' his influence and authority were alike strictly personal, and he was always thrown back on his own personal resources. He had nothing of the *caste* feeling of Royalty, though his bearing was so naturally courteous that it was *almost* royal. But it was always courtesy to the individual man, not to the member of a class. His social bearing resolved itself into an infinite number of personal relations, within that society of which he was a member, not the external Head; and his energies were dissipated and lost amidst a crowd of separate and special transactions. He tried to know and he

tried to govern every individual baron, and he met every revolt and encountered every danger as it arose. But he had no conception of either the general interests or the aggregate prejudices of classes as such, and he neglected the means for securing permanently the one, while he frequently outraged the other. He looked on men as individuals, and not as Barons or Churchmen, and his relations with them had never the weight and authority of Imperial State action. He corrected as he best could special evils as they rose, but he made no general provisions which might guard against their recurrence. He had great force of character, but no grasp of mind, and no foresight. He could not generalise, and he spent his life and wore out his body in a fruitless struggle with details. Never under an energetic and well-intentioned prince had the Executive authority been so ignored throughout England, or the overseeing protection of the State been so nearly a dead letter. Every man fought for his own hand, and the weakest went to the wall. A thousand different centres of authority were set up in the civil life of the country, and in most cases these were but so many impersonations of evil.

The King's name, indeed, was not odious in the eyes of the people, but it was no longer a tower of strength and of protection against oppression. It was even worse, for it was a cover to oppression. Stephen not only relied for his government on his

personal relations with men, but he was singularly deficient in knowledge of men and in penetration into character. The very invariableness of his gentle courtesy to all men was perhaps in some measure connected with this, for he had not the depth of character which, as in the instance of Henry the First, would enable him to wear a smooth countenance to those whose inherent villainy had been revealed to his penetration. Stephen was courteous to all, partly because he trusted all, or, at any rate, could not distrust them at that moment. The charges against him of insincerity and non-fulfilment of his fair promises may really have arisen from mere excess of temporary good feeling, and prodigality of good intentions, which were based on a purely imaginary estimate of the individual, and could never be realised, in the stern necessities of the future. I do not think that any charge of wilful deceit and treachery has been fairly brought home to Stephen. This want of penetration into personal character, however, placed the King at the mercy of every false friend and every designing villain. More than half the advantages he gained by his energy and military skill he lost by listening to unwise or treacherous counsels, and by impolitic leniency. But for this, Bristol, the heart of the revolt, would have soon fallen into his hands, and but for this, Matilda herself would have become his prisoner, and every noble in England have been made to respect

and obey him. And this unfortunate choice of advisers, and misplaced confidence in men, did not only affect his own interests and reputation most prejudicially, but also lay at the root of much of the misery of the kingdom. Not merely had the King to incur the burden of odium attaching to the misdoings of his ministers and advisers, but the people themselves were handed over to the irresponsible mercies of the worst and most tyrannical men. I do not believe that Stephen ever wilfully and consciously placed a tyrannical oppressor in power over any part of his dominions; but his want of insight into character, combined with an easy and careless disposition, injured not only his own interests, but those also of other people. He had continually to conciliate enemies (as he did not choose to crush them), and he forgot, that it is one thing to pardon an offence against oneself, and another to place others at the mercy of the pardoned offender. So, without intending it, and through sheer careless kindliness to individuals, he unwittingly handed over half his subjects to a doom of intolerable oppression.

That, under all these drawbacks, Stephen should have been, as he certainly was, a popular king, is a striking testimony to his personal character. The people at large had, as we have seen, heavy complaints which they might justly urge against his thoughtless neglect of their interests. The barons,

if they profited frequently by his weakness, had, along with the people, a common cause of complaint against him in the foreign mercenaries (chiefly Flemings) on whom he lavished the gold accumulations of Henry the First, and whose services he thought preferable to those of his Anglo-Norman vassals. These men, though not more covetous and rapacious than other adventurers, had no time given them, owing to the nearly incessant demand on their services in the field, to acquire the character of settled inhabitants of the country, and the unmixed feeling which they thus inspired of a merely mercenary army, without bonds of sympathy with the soil and the native population, made them hateful to all classes of Englishmen. The Church, towards which the King had no special antipathy, like his predecessor Rufus, felt itself outraged in the persons of its leading ecclesiastics, whom the King treated as if they were mere laymen, and on whom he was sometimes (for him) unusually severe, because they offered to him a corporate instead of an individual resistance. He could not understand caste obstinacy and disobedience, and when brought face to face with it he lost his usual kindly forbearance exactly where, for his own interests, it was most needed. Yet, with all these grievances against him, there was a general disposition in all classes to like and to sympathise with him. When he was in captivity, the cry for his release arose alike from

layman and cleric, from high and low, from friends and opponents, and her obstinacy on this point diverted more than any other thing the hearts of the nation from Matilda. The Londoners, who, protected by customs and officers of their own, and living more closely in his immediate presence, had no cause to dread the great nobles, and saw little but the favourable side of the King's character, were devoted to him, and contributed largely to his money-bags and militia; while the men of Kent, also more protected against feudal usurpation than other parts of England, rallied round his wife when all England besides had apparently forsaken him. A sovereign who could enlist such sympathies on his side could not have been a bad man, or an entirely weak man. He was a kind but not infatuated father, and a faithful husband to one of the noblest women of the age. But he was no king; he was only the first and the best of the barons.

For estimating the character of his rival, Matilda, or, as she is better known, 'the Empress Maud,' we have far fewer materials, and my conclusions must therefore be much less positive, and may be, to some extent, unjust. Most of her life was passed out of England, and English chroniclers seem to have interested themselves wonderfully little in the peculiarities of her character. By birth half-Norman, half-Saxon, she seems to have combined the hard and proud character of the one with the stubborn

obstinacy of the other. She had undaunted courage, and a masculine spirit of enterprise, with a masculine sternness of mind. Whatever there may have been in her of the gentle and the womanly seems to have been suppressed by the circumstances of her early life. Betrothed in her eighth year, and sent to be educated in Germany, where she became the wife of an Emperor when she had scarcely passed her twelfth birthday, she naturally grew up in the ideas of the land of her husband, and in all the stiff restraints of an Imperial position. We know that the impression which she left behind her in her Imperial home was not an unfavourable one, and that nobles of Lorraine and Lombardy (the seat of her Imperial dower-lands) followed her on her return to the Court of her father, claiming her back as their chosen ruler. We can well conceive that her stately, haughty bearing, and her proud self-dependence would suit well the headship of that elaborate hierarchy of dignities which called itself the successor of the Empire of the West. But it was a difficult thing for one who had sat by the side of the successor of Charlemagne, first to sink into a little Countess of Anjou, and then to drive a disadvantageous bargain for her father's crown with a rebellious and lawless nobility. If the pride of the Empress Dowager and of the woman were severely wounded by the forced marriage with a petty count and a clever, precocious stripling, with a will of his

own, quite as much must the haughty spirit of the daughter of Henry and the granddaughter of the Conqueror have chafed under the necessity of perpetual conciliation and concession towards the barons of her own party in England. That she was a woman of some power of mind we might gather, if only from the influence which she is stated to have exercised over her father's counsels on an important point, such as the choice of the noble gaoler for Duke Robert. But she came to England with Imperial ideas and a wounded spirit, and both alike disabled her from ruling this country. She looked down with indifferent contempt on all ranks of society alike. If Stephen was merely one unit in the social mass, she was so removed from it that she scarcely recognised its existence. The Londoners complained bitterly of her insolent treatment of their great citizens when they besought her to lighten her heavy demands on their purses. But they had no reason to complain of being worse handled than others. She treated the barons, who, abandoning Stephen's cause, sought her favour, with the ill-concealed scorn fitting for renegades, but most impolitic in one who benefited by their recreancy. She seemed to ignore the influence and counsels even of her half-brother Robert of Gloucester, to whom she was chiefly indebted for her crown; while the proud, intriguing Bishop of Winchester retreated to his diocese, feeling himself for the first time in

his career counted as of no weight. Even if she had been forewarned of her approaching downfall, the probability is that she would have preferred a brief reign of independent royalty to long years as a puppet sovereign. She had but one rule with friend and foe—she kept them all at a distance. With an undisputed title to the position she held, she might have been tolerated and respected; as a competitor for the crown, she merely alienated everybody; and when her son was recognised by the King of France as Duke of Normandy, and again by the united English factions as the adopted son and successor of Stephen, her own prior claims were passed over, and were virtually negatived. The very reverse of her rival, she lost all by being a King overmuch, and nothing but a King.

HENRY THE SECOND.

With the accession of the House of Anjou to the throne of England, we feel at once that we are on new ground, and that, though there is a certain continuity both in the history of the country and in the character of the reigning sovereigns before and after that event, there is also a marked change in the one and a fresh element in the other. If, as I believe, infusions of new blood into families never destroy and seldom seriously diminish the force of existing elements of character, and though sometimes modifying the character as a whole by their co-existence, more frequently manifest themselves from time to time as an additional type of character in individual members of the family, alternating, according to some unknown law, with the old elements, it is especially important to ascertain what this new blood really is, as this knowledge will be one essential key to character for the succeeding history of the family. The House of Anjou, according to the family legend, had its origin during the Carlovingian period of French history in one Ingelgar,

raised to the dignity of Count by Charles the Bald, or his son, Louis the Stammerer, some time in the latter half of the ninth century. This Ingelgar, we are further told, was the son of one Tertullus, a peasant (raised by Charles to the rank of Seneschal), who was the son of Torquatius (corruptly called Tortulfus), a Roman settler, whose family had been expelled from Armorica by order of the Emperor Maximus. We attach no authority to the legend, which may be entirely unfounded, but we can, I think, recognise in the family type of the Counts of Anjou some characteristics which are Italian rather than Teutonic or Celtic. Strong men they nearly all of them were, and wise men also in their generation. Learned far beyond the average of their age, one of them was himself the author of a fragment on Angevin history, which is described as of considerable merit, and another is the reputed author of the proverb that an unlettered king is but a crowned ass. Courageous when needful, but never unnecessarily courageous, they were good soldiers, but better statesmen. Hot-blooded by nature, but patient by policy. Generally very prudent, but always very pertinacious. Not too proud to crouch for a time in order to gain an ulterior end, but too proud ever to forget the indignity, and with only too good a memory of the past. Capable of unscrupulous cruelty, but averse to wanton brutality. Often kind-hearted and habitually courteous, but not always

trustworthy. Often true and reliable in a wider sense and in the essence of the matter, but seldom scrupulous as to immediate promises or acts. With little or no faith, but a great deal of superstition; readily submitting to do penance for the evil means employed, but holding fast to the ill-gotten gain. Perfect actors, but not wholly untrue men.

Henry the Second of England, the representative of this line of Counts, partook of these family characteristics, though his Anglo-Norman descent was not wanting in its counterbalancing influences. Seldom has a general moral estimate formed of a character respecting whose leading points there is so little dispute varied so much among historians as in his case. His contemporaries range in their verdicts from the strongest praise to the deepest reprobation, and modern writers, if less unreserved in their language, are no less marked in their general tone. The great question involved in the Church controversy between him and Becket has, no doubt, had considerable effect in causing this divergence of sympathies, but apart from this, his nature was as complex as those of Stephen and Matilda seem to be simple and manifest; and there is so much of what appears to be inconsistent and antagonistic in both the good and evil points of his character, that men have naturally judged very differently about what they could scarcely understand.

Henry of Anjou was, beyond dispute, a real King.

He could not only govern, but he could make his position as King distinctly felt throughout the nation. There was no question about paying respect to his authority. The Executive in his hands was a reality, and he himself was the hinge on which English society hung. His character, if it was considerably affected by external circumstances, was powerful enough to impress its own stamp most decidedly on all around. Under its influence England ceased to be a mere cock-pit for rival barons and a disorganized social chaos. The idea of order and law once more predominated, and the Executive was again their vindicator and guardian. To effect this some strong efforts of physical force had to be made, and some questionable acts of authority were resorted to. A Royal army swept through the kingdom, capturing and destroying the strongholds of the most turbulent or dangerous nobles, and it is said that the King dared to proclaim the resumption to the Crown of all grants since the death of Henry I. But these special acts of aggressive vigour were less influential agents in ushering in the new era of assured tranquillity than the constant and habitual presence of a watchful and provident administrative system. To whatever extent our judicial system owes its present shape to the sagacity of Henry of Anjou, it seems certain that (however slow and imperfect his process might be) he brought the safeguard and criterion of law closer to every

inhabitant of England. The chroniclers tell us that he loved to depress and humiliate the proud nobles, and to raise up men from nothing; and that he was jealous of the talents and influence of no men, so long as their power was derived from himself ultimately. He felt that any doubt as to where the ultimate authority rested was fatal to confidence and sustained order. His expedition in person to Ireland was dictated by something of this feeling, and had he not been drawn away prematurely from that scene by domestic disturbances, he would probably have inaugurated a system of government in the island very different indeed from the anarchical despotisms, feudal and patriarchal, which sowed the seeds of Ireland's future misery and degradation. These are characteristics of a great and strong administrator, and to some extent of a great legislator. But the highest legislative faculty implies also an amount of originality of conception for which we can scarcely give Henry II. credit. He had a great knowledge of the ideas of others, and of the results of ideas and systems in past times, and under every variety of circumstances. Contemporaries who knew him well personally, and who were competent judges, tell us that he had a remarkable knowledge of history, and was continually accumulating facts, and discussing questions of interest with the ablest men he could find; while his astonishing memory prevented his ever losing anything he thus acquired. He studied

the past for the lessons of the past, and he studied the events and the men of his own age in order to be able to use them as elements in forming his judgment of measures and of policy. He seems to have had little instinctive insight into men, but he made up to some extent for this deficiency by close observation. He never, it is said, forgot a face on which he had once steadily gazed. He had the learned and literary tastes of his family, inherited both from his Angevin ancestors, and from his student-grandfather, Henry Beauclerc. He was an accomplished master of the spoken languages of Europe, and whatever knowledge of men and the art of government could be acquired through the medium of study and personal intercourse and observation, he gained, and was ever gaining. He had a clear, sound judgment, and (in matters of policy) a cool head. But he had but little initiative, and avowedly often waited for the further development of events to determine his action. He thought long, that when the occasion offered he might act promptly and decisively, and he never ventured a step further than the necessities of his position or his policy seemed to demand.

The impetuous and impulsive natives of his Southern Continental dominions could not understand this, to their minds, want of enterprise in their new ruler. They were obliged by the force of facts to admit that he could acquire and retain, by a judicious mixture of armed force and subtle policy, the whole western

sea-board of France, from the confines of Flanders to the Pyrenees. But they could not understand how a man who could gain so much could calmly stop short at this point, and not proceed immediately to grasp more, and to expel the House of Capet altogether from the soil of France;—and so the Troubadours in their lays reproached him for what they thought a want of courage and a spirit of unworthy concession. They did not understand the character of a man who, working out a carefully-conceived policy through the agency of passing opportunities, could make long pauses, and give ground even for the time, awaiting patiently fresh occasions for the further development of that policy. The desultory, purposeless warfare, of which he was a spectator in the early years of his life, had evidently made a deep impression on his mind; and bold enough when he saw that the road was one which he must take in order to arrive at an important end, he felt no temptation to indulge in border raids, or to enter on rash enterprises which could not be sustained.

Like his grandfather, Beauclerc, Henry was very cautious, but his caution formed part of his premeditated plans; he did not really hesitate or recede, but paused or stopped short, because he had never intended to do more. The very fact that he based his action on accumulated experience, and regulated it by close and continuous observation of the course

of events, guarded him to a great extent from engaging in enterprises beyond his strength, and from the consequent mortification of an unforeseen check. Had he been more original in his ideas he might have been less uniformly successful. This peculiarity of disposition or policy led him generally to avoid war as much as possible, and to have recourse in preference to diplomacy, or, at any rate, delay. As a statesman he distrusted the uncertainty of appeals to arms, and as a political student his nature revolted from the coarse and brutal character of this mode of decision. He was not naturally a soldier or a general. He was curiously economical of life, and it was said he regretted the dead far more than he appreciated or rewarded the living; that he bitterly bewailed the loss of those to whom in their lifetime he had been only a hard and exacting master. Their slaughter was so much loss of material. War, with its blind fury, menaces indiscriminately the lives of the best men and the least efficient; and Death, while obliterating, often for the first time appraises them at their just value.

A policy so mature in its conception, and so measured in its execution, we might well suppose to have been the symbol and reflection of a tranquil, passionless, well-ordered nature in its author. But this was not the case, and here begin the curious contradictions in the character of Henry. His temperament was not passionless, but full of *com-*

pressed passion ; his mind was not tranquil and nonchalant, but seethed with the restrained excitement of expectation. We have a very minute account of his personal appearance and habits from those who were often admitted to his inmost circle, and the picture is a most curious one. He was a man of middle height, broad-chested, and with sinewy arms, rather inclined to be corpulent. His head was large and round. His complexion was reddish and freckled, his eyes greyish-blue, and his voice unmodulated. He was very abstemious in his diet, and his only sensual excesses lay in another direction. Giraldus Cambrensis, however, tells us that he preserved some external decorum even in these, until after his wife's misconduct in abetting the rebellions of his sons. But one great feature in his habits was his restlessness. He was scarcely ever still. He took the most violent and prolonged exercise on horseback, hunting or hawking. When he returned home he seldom sat down, but continued either walking or standing. During this time he was either reading or maintaining a conversation with his 'clerks' on deep and intricate subjects. He was affable and unconstrained in his demeanour, and had great flow and power of speech. He had his pleasant jest, without losing his dignity. Parsimonious in his private capacity, in his public he was lavish and magnificent. His extreme restlessness, which appears to have made a great impression on observers, was

by some attributed to a desire to guard against his tendency to corpulency; but it was not an artificial device, but a physical necessity. It was thus that he gave some vent and relief to that eager, impatient spirit, which fretted under the delays imposed by his own well-weighed and deliberate policy, and it was thus that by constant physical exertion or absorbing intellectual exercise he reduced within the limits of control his heated rebellious blood. But there were times when the fetters in which he bound his spirit were snapped asunder, and when the whole Southern nature of the man burst forth, terrifying all around him. It is one thing to wait patiently for the long-deferred realisation of a deeply-cherished plan, it is another to see it suddenly overthrown by some unforeseen and irreparable catastrophe. Henry could not bear such disappointment, and this characteristic affected in an unfavourable manner his morality as well as his personal demeanour. He had the character of a most untruthful man. The King of France declared to his ambassadors that the English King was so full of fraud and deceit, so regardless of his word and covenant, that it was impossible to put faith in him; and a Cardinal, after a long conversation with him, said, 'Never did I witness this man's equal in lying.' Lying was *not* the exception among great men in those times, and Henry's lying is explained in one respect by Giraldus by the very plausible hypothesis that he thought it

better to repent of what he said than of what he did, and to fail in his word rather than miscarry in his act. He could not sacrifice an elaborate plan to truth; and the same cause which produced his insincerity and faithlessness also broke through his reserve, and revealed his genuine physical temperament. He became, we are told, a very 'lion, and more ferocious than a lion.' His eyes rolled wildly and became blood-shot, his face was inflamed, he poured forth a torrent of abuse and imprecations, and assailed with his hands all within his reach. When, on one of these occasions, a page presented a letter, the King attempted to tear out his eyes, and the boy did not escape without severe scars. On another, when a favourite minister ventured to justify the conduct of the King of Scots, Henry called him a traitor, threw down his cap, ungirt his sword, tore off his clothes, pulled the silk coverlet from his couch, and, throwing himself on the ground, gnawed the straw on the floor. This demonstrative passion was neither English nor Norman, and it gives us an increased opinion of the general power of self-control which could enable a man with such a temperament to be the prudent and sagacious statesman that Henry was.

There were other characteristics of his Angevin ancestors in the English King. Like them he had no faith, but he had superstition. We are told that he paid no attention to the ordinary religious observ-

ances of the Church; he refused to listen to clerical admonitions on his moral conduct, and he had no scruple in appropriating or retaining in his hands Church revenues, or in simoniacal transactions with respect to Church preferments. He was at one time, at any rate, curiously scrupulous as to his oath of fealty to his feudal Suzerain, the King of France; but he cared little about oaths in general, holding, it is said, one particular form of oath alone as inviolable. In his contest with Becket there was a curious alternation of royal dignity, persistent determination, and harsh violence, with abject submissions, sudden changes in temper and policy, and most degrading and superstitious penances. Attracted by his talents, he had raised the man originally from a subordinate position to the Chancellorship, and assured, as he thought, by his seeming subserviency and coarse jovial ways, against the reproduction of an Anselm in his person, he made him Archbishop. But here his observation had not compensated for his want of penetration into character. Becket became his most dangerous opponent, appearing in the new character of the demagogue priest. Henry tried to conciliate, and then to cow him into submission. When Becket recanted his recantation, he drove him and his family from the kingdom with harsh violence. Then he suddenly changed his game, and lured him back to England by an absolute and abject submission; and when this strong appeal to Becket's old feelings of friendship (on which Henry had so much counted as

an agent in the ultimate realisation of his own views, and which was not altogether insincere, so far as the feelings themselves were concerned) failed in restraining Becket from an arrogant and inconsiderate parade and abuse of his temporary triumph, the passion of the King broke forth, and he uttered the fatal words which brought on the murder of the Archbishop. Finally, when, although he had disarmed the anger of the Church by earnest disclaimers of the authorship of the crime, fortune seemed to have suddenly deserted him in all his enterprises, his superstition effected what his principles had failed to do. Not content with making the fullest pecuniary atonement, he hurried to Canterbury, and subjected himself to the most ascetic penances at the Archbishop's tomb. The penance seemed to work, for the first news after it which greeted him was the unexpected capture of the King of Scots; and Henry, relieved in conscience, and a man seemingly pardoned by Heaven, proceeded once more with renewed spirit to undo the work of the martyr whom he had just acknowledged as a saint, and to consolidate and extend those 'Constitutions of Clarendon,' to his opposition to which the Archbishop had virtually sacrificed his life! For, a true Angevin, though Henry crouched, he gave up no spoils.

Historians are divided as to his capability of forgiving offences. The probability is, that as he never abandoned a friend, he also never *forgot* an injury, though he did not often think it worth his while to

be unforgiving. He could often frankly ignore the past, but in some cases he could neither forget nor forgive. He had much to forgive in his own domestic circle, and the cause of his misunderstandings with his sons has been matter of much speculation. Giraldus, however, tells us that though an over-indulgent parent to them when young children, he was a *step*-father, making no allowances for them, when they grew up. This is not an uncommon parental feature, and seems to arise from an excessive pleasure in the helplessness and necessary dependence and trustfulness of the young child, and in disappointment and distrust at the rising independence and alien interests of the growing youth. In Henry's case it led to the final catastrophe of his life. All his sons had disappointed and defied him, but he still clung to the idea of the loyal devotion of the youngest, about whom his loving delusions as to his young children still lingered. But when, in the very agony of his humiliation before his eldest surviving son, and his hereditary enemy, Philip of France, the name of 'Earl John' appeared at the head of the list of rebellious barons whom he was required to pardon, the heart of the Father and of the King broke at the same moment, and he bade farewell to the world and to policy, and, in the bitter despair of his whole nature, cursing all his legitimate sons, died refusing to recall that curse, attended and consoled only by the untiring affection of one base-born child.

RICHARD THE FIRST.

In one respect, if in no other, Richard *Cœur de Lion* has experienced the same fortune as his father. Both are among the most bepraised and best abused Kings in history, and in each instance in the estimates for evil and for good there is a considerable foundation of truth. Neither of them, though stained with not a few crimes, can be pronounced justly an absolutely bad man; and, on the other hand, each of them, though endowed with commanding qualities, leaves on the mind a certain impression of incompleteness. As the statesmanship of Henry, so the personal ascendancy of Richard stopped short of that impressive grandeur which marked the character of the Conqueror, and of one at least of their own descendants. Yet the nature of Richard of Aquitaine or Poitou, as he was for some time called, was not poor, purposeless, and fickle, as some modern historians, following too implicitly the statements of his enemies, have depicted it; and if less complex and less interesting as a study of character than that of his father, it is sufficiently unusual to be worthy of more than passing attention.

That modern writers should have been led to adopt this error of the earlier chroniclers respecting Richard has probably arisen from a previous false conception on their own part of his character as a whole, owing to the delusive position in which that prince presents himself to our eyes in the early part of his career. He was called 'of Aquitaine,' which was handed over to his rule, and he appears before us as the favourite son of his mother, the heiress of Southern France, and as the especial hero of the Troubadours of that old land of the Celtiberians, the Romans, and the Visi-Goths. He was not only the companion-in-arms of the Knights of Aquitaine, but was himself a poet-warrior, after the true Provençal fashion. Historians have, therefore, naturally enough, leapt to the conclusion that he derived his nature as well as the fashion of his life from this fiery, impulsive, southern population, and have drawn his character on the assumption that such was its essential structure. Arriving at this conclusion, they have adopted without much investigation those statements respecting his personal characteristics which seemed to harmonise with this general conception. But I cannot but think that although the outward fashion of his education and early training were doubtless derived from the lands south of the Loire, and though he himself spoke and wrote his *Sirventes* in the soft *Langue d'Oc*, the main outlines of his organisation were derived from a very differ-

ent source. His analogues are to be found rather in the pages of the Eddas and Sagas of the North, and it was as a Scandinavian Viking that he thought and acted. I do not deny that this Scandinavian type may have been modified in some of its component parts, as well as in its outward garb, by the blood which he derived from Eleanor of Aquitaine; but while I cannot reconcile the leading features of Richard's character with the Aquitanian type, I *do* recognise in them most distinctly some of the most striking traits of those Scandinavian rovers from whom, through his Norman ancestors, he more remotely sprang. There was the commanding presence which overawed opposition, and seemed to stamp him as a natural leader of men; there was the chivalrous yet somewhat stern courtesy; there was the uncompromising pride; there was the adventurous spirit in which the love of fame and the lawless greed of acquisition seemed to be blended in almost equal proportions; there was the devotion to a great purpose of an enthusiast, often distracted for the moment by the temptation of immediate adventure and gain, but using even these distractions as new instruments in its further prosecution; there was the thirst for battle, and the delight in the mere physical contest, befitting a wild animal rather than an intelligent being, and yet the common sense and shrewdness of perception which could see the limits of acquisition and of fame, and could turn away

from fruitless laurels. This was the character of those men who made a home for themselves in the Neustria of the Franks, and who established Norman rule in Southern Italy and Sicily—and such was the essential foundation of the character of Richard Lion Heart. Tall above the middle height, but more remarkable for his broad chest, and strong yet pliant sinews, he was by general confession *physically* the *strongest* of living men, as he was also physically the most inaccessible to fear and the most self-confident in his strength. On one occasion, putting to sea with a handful of followers, he hastened to the relief of Joppa, into which town the Turks had already forced their way, and were assailing the remnants of the Christian garrison. After a hasty reconnoitre, Richard drove his vessel on shore, and raising his fierce war-cry, plunged into the midst of the masses of the enemy, and drove them out of the place. On the next day, while encamping with a few hundred horsemen outside the gates, he was suddenly assailed by thousands of the Turks. Driving back the foremost assailants, he himself clove a Turk's head down to the shoulders, and then rode along the enemy's front line, crying, 'Now, who will dare to fight for the honour of God?' Years after the close of the Crusade, the Turkish mothers threatened their children with 'King Richard is coming!' and the riders asked their shying horses, 'if they saw the Lion-hearted King.'

His mental and moral constitution seemed as if they had been assimilated to, or almost as if they were the developments of, this physical force. He was a magnificent animal, even in his spiritual aspect. He was savage when roused to anger, and cruel, as much perhaps from the natural indifference to suffering in itself or others of a powerful physique as from conscious malice; but placable when the exciting cause was removed, and capable of a strong-hearted *masculine* mercy much resembling that displayed on occasions by Rufus, with whom one modern writer has fancied a resemblance in the character of his vices. The story of his conduct to the archer whose arrow caused his death, if not true in itself, at any rate represents what it was considered Richard was capable of, and reads very like the stories already related of the strange Red King. 'He ordered,' says Roger de Hoveden, 'Bertram de Gurdun, who had wounded him, to come into his presence, and said to him, "What harm have I done to you that you have killed me?" On which he made answer, "You slew my father and my two brothers with your own hand, and you had intended now to kill me; therefore, take any revenge on me that you may think fit, for I will readily endure the greatest torments you can devise, so long as you have met with your end, after having inflicted evils so many and so great upon the world." On this the King ordered him to be released, and said,

"I forgive you my death." But the youth stood before the feet of the King, and with scowling features and undaunted neck did his courage demand the sword. The King was aware that punishment was wished for, and that pardon was dreaded. "Live on," he said, "although thou art unwilling, and by my bounty behold the light of day. To the conquered faction now let there be bright hopes, and the example of myself." And then, after being released from his chains, he was allowed to depart, and the King ordered one hundred shillings of English money to be given him.' But if Richard was not implacable or cruel, he was a very stern man in his bearing even when not roused to anger, and there seems to have been a gravity in his nature from which we might have expected far greater results than any which were achieved. Giraldus, in drawing a comparison between him and his elder brother Henry, points directly to this cast of character. 'In force and largeness of mind,' he says, 'they were pretty much on a level, but their way of excelling was very different. The one [Henry] was praiseworthy for his mildness and liberality; the other remarkable for his severity and stability. The one was to be commended for his sweetness, the other for his gravity; the one gained credit for his easy disposition, the other for his constancy; the one was conspicuous for his mercy, the other for his justice; the one was the refuge of the unfortunate

ill-deserving, the other was their scourge; the one was the shield of evil, the other its hammer; the one was devoted to the game of War, the other to its serious part; the one to strangers, the other to his own circle; the one to all men, the other to good men.' No one will deny that here we have attributed to Richard a weight of character which is very inconsistent with the mere knight-errantry which is generally associated with his name. But though he was not an empty-headed trifler, the patient statesmanship of his father, Henry, formed no part of the endowments of Richard. He was a great general and a great engineer; could not only fight, but plan campaigns, and was a master of the science of war. By his strength of purpose and military abilities he not only maintained his footing in France, but threatened the very existence of the Parisian crown. One or two great feats of provident statesmanship, such as his alliance with the Court of Rome, and the purchase by his gold of the position of King of the Romans for his nephew Otho, attest the existence of talents of a still higher order. But his naturally frank and overbearing nature revolted alike from the subtleties and the condescensions of diplomacy, and was, indeed, incapable of either appreciating or employing them. He had a power of quick observation, and a fairly good judgment; he listened to good advisers, and he relied for the rest on the ascendancy and force of

his personal character, and his established reputation as a strong and faithful friend and a dangerous enemy. He was not, indeed (as has been generally supposed), wanting in a sense of his responsibilities as a ruler. He was very seldom in England, in person, it is true, and he left his kingdom to pursue what seems to us a wild and unnecessary enterprise; but he made the best provision he could for the administration of this country during his absence. He placed at the head of the Government as Chancellor a man who, whatever may be alleged against him by his enemies, and however unfortunate his career, added to remarkable abilities a strength of will which for some time sustained that stability in the executive which the absence of the King was so calculated to impair. He made his brother, Earl John, and his half-brother, Archbishop Geoffrey, take an oath not to enter England for three years, and he tried to stay their ambition and bind them to the observance of this engagement by loading them with dignities and wealth. He kept a watchful eye on English politics during his absence, and his long stay in Sicily, which has been considered a blot on his character as a zealous Crusader, was probably dictated by a dread of impending civil war in England. The great officers of State and Justice who succeeded Longchamp were men of character and ability, and notwithstanding the King's absence and the treason of Earl John, the kingdom really remained to a

great degree under the safeguard of an effective executive. Nor can Richard be accused of want of foresight with respect to the interests of his Continental possessions, when Philip of France, from whose ambition they were most exposed to danger, was his companion to the Holy Land. But had he believed that all would have been lost during his absence, though Richard's steps might have lingered, they would scarcely have been arrested, so confident was he in his power of retrieving everything, and so strong in him was the spirit of the Crusader. The Crusades, indeed, gave exactly the appropriate vent to his adventurous spirit. There was a great cause, that of God Himself, at stake, and Richard was a devout believer. The indistinctness of the horizon which lay before him added an imaginative zest to the enterprise, while the concrete possibilities of wealth and royalties in the conquered East awakened the covetous side of his character. He was lavish and magnificent in his expenditure, and the whole Crusade lived on his accumulated wealth for many months; but he did not lose sight of contingent advantages, and the conquest of Cyprus was valued perhaps even more as the acquisition of a satrapy than as a base of military operations, or a trophy of his warlike fame.

Richard was not only devout, by which means he conciliated the clergy, but he had the superstition of the Angevins. Although his sensual intrigues do

not intrude themselves on the page of history like those of his father, he was, by his own confession, addicted to gross indulgences. Twice before his death we hear of his sudden fits of remorse and penance for these excesses, and the account is a very curious one. 'Having called together,' says Roger de Hoveden, 'all the Archbishops and Bishops who were with him at Messina, in the chapel of Reginald de Moyac, he fell naked at their feet, and did not hesitate to confess to God in their presence the filthiness of his life. . . . He received the penance imposed by the Bishops before named, and from that hour forward became a man who feared God, and left what was evil and did what was good.' This good conduct was not, however, of a permanent character, for we read in the same chronicler, under the year 1195, 'In the same year there came a hermit to King Richard, and preaching the word of eternal salvation to him,' warned him to 'abstain from what is unlawful,' saying, 'if thou dost not, a vengeance worthy of God shall overtake thee.' The King, however, 'despised the person of the adviser,' and the hermit went his way. But 'on the Lord's Day, in Easter week . . . . the Lord scourged the King with a severe attack of illness, so that, calling before him religious men, he was not ashamed to confess the guiltiness of his life; and after receiving absolution, took back his wife, whom for a long time he had discarded, and

putting away all illicit intercourse, he remained constant to his wife, and they two became one flesh.' His last recorded penitence was on his death-bed; but before the Bishop could move him on this occasion, he had to encounter a sally of grim wit on the part of the dying man, which again reminds us of Rufus. When persuaded of the truth of his impending death, Richard asked what he was to do. 'Consider of disposing of thy daughters in marriage, and do penance,' replied the prelate. 'This confirms what I said before,' said the King, 'that you are jesting with me, for you know that I have never had either daughters or sons.' 'Of a truth, O King!' rejoined the Bishop, 'you have three daughters, and have had and nourished them long; for as your first-born daughter you have *Pride*, as your second *Covetousness*, as your third, *Self-indulgence*,—these you have had, and have loved out of all reason from your very youth.' 'True it is,' said the King, 'that I have had these, and thus it is that I will bestow them in marriage. My first-born, *Pride*, I give to the Templars, who are swollen with insolence, and puffed up beyond all others. My second, that is *Covetousness*, I give to the Grey Friars, who with their covetousness molest all their neighbours, like mad devils. My last, however, namely, *Self-indulgence*, I make over to the Black Friars, who devour roast meat and fried, and are never satiated.' 'For,'

adds William de Hemingburgh, in explanation, 'these three sorts of men the King hated.'

The Bishop and the King were certainly both correct in their enumeration of Richard's cherished faults. By his arrogance he lost half the advantages which his acknowledged ascendancy among the princes of Europe would have secured to him. On this point historians of all nations, English, French, and German, are agreed. He could not conceal his sense of his own superiority, and he could not conceal his opinion of the contemptible character of others; and this fact in itself disqualified him for excellence in statesmanship, and gave to his rival, Philip of France, an advantage which was not the due of any substantial superiority of mind. Covetousness, too, was, as I have said, one of Richard's undoubted failings, and to it he owes some of the greatest stains on his memory,—his extortion and his 'wanton disregard of good faith in regard to money.' Where this was required for the purposes of his ambition, no consideration of the dignity and influence of the Crown, of the welfare of the nation, or of the justice due to individuals, was allowed to stand in the way. He abandoned royal privileges; he alienated royal domains; he sold not only charters to municipalities, but half the honours and dignities of the kingdom to the highest bidder; he levied heavy taxes, and he wrung large sums from individual barons and officers of State to appease his

assumed anger. The better qualities of his mind seemed to disappear under this thirst for the means of war, and he was for the time the scourge of his subjects. Yet, though he was covetous and extortionate, he was no miser. What he thus obtained, he spent—some of it unworthily, no doubt, much of it unwisely and heedlessly, but much also of it in the prosecution of great ends, which were felt by the nation then, though they might not be so now, to be worth the spending of much money. He was generous as well as extortionate; and by the magnificence of his royal bounty he added to the reputation of the nation abroad, while he impoverished both it and himself at home. Faults thus redeemed were easily forgiven by a nation which, under a generally good administration and advancing foreign commerce, for which the Crusade had opened fresh outlets, was growing rapidly in wealth and self-importance, and I see little reason for wondering with one of the chroniclers, that the people were contented under Richard's scorpions, while they had murmured under his father Henry's rods, that he died amidst the loud lamentation that with him had departed the glory of the world, and that his name descended to succeeding generations as that of one of the most popular of English kings.

JOHN.

In examining into the motives which appear to have influenced the conduct of our Princes, we have hitherto been able to recognise a considerable ingredient of good; but we now come to a King the actuating principle of whose life, if not always flagrantly evil, was always purely selfish in the narrowest and lowest sense of the term. It is not any absence of intellectual ability either in the field or in council, it is not the disastrous issue of his Continental enterprises, it is not his acts of violence and cruelty and his general misrule at home, it is not his fits of passion, and his frequent personal humiliations which really create in our minds that feeling of abhorrence with which the memory of John of Anjou has been almost universally regarded, from his own times down to the present. This feeling, if I mistake not, arises from a conviction of the entire absence from the character of this, the worst, though not the weakest, of the Plantagenets, of all good and generous impulses. In nearly every one of our Princes, we are able (on careful examination) to find

some traces of the better side of human nature; but the paramount spirit of John, after every allowance has been made for his special misdeeds and his special failings, appears to have been evil, and evil in the most typical sense of the word. The essential characteristic of absolute evil is absolute selfishness, that selfishness which excludes all sympathy with anything beyond the supposed interests of the one individual himself. With such a nature there is but one motive, *self-gratification*, and but one restraining influence, *fear*, and by these two balancing forces, it seems to me, the character of John can alone be explained. If I wished, indeed, to give an example of the true diabolic type of character, I could not find anywhere a better one; and the epithet '*base*,' which has been so generally bestowed by historians on this prince, is but another form of expressing the same judgment. Nothing could more conclusively overthrow the theory of the compatibility of intellectual grandeur of character with the spirit of absolute evil. It is, perhaps, scarcely possible for a *very* weak man intellectually to be a perfect incarnation of evil; with an intellect of the highest order it is quite impossible. A certain amount of ability seems to be needed for the full development of the characteristics of evil; but the higher qualities of intellect imply also a broad consideration of the relations of men and things, which is quite inconsistent with the narrow selfishness of pure evil. The

wisdom of evil scarcely rises above the level of practised cunning, its courage above that of violent self-assertion, and its energy above that of fitful and capricious passion. Such a character is fortunately rare in the pages of history; but it is such a character, as it seems to me, that we have to consider in estimating the qualities of John of England.

In person, John was not so powerfully built as his brothers Henry and Richard. Like his brother Geoffrey, in whom there seems to have been much that was similar in disposition, he was only of middle height. But his features were handsome, and his manners very attractive. He was a *very* pleasant companion, possessed of a considerable amount of humour, sometimes of the grim Anglo-Norman type, but more usually of a lighter and more southern character. His volatile levity (the true offspring of his self-absorption) was conspicuous from his earliest years. Though he was capable of deep designs and bold enterprises, he was at the bottom a mere trifler. He was only earnest in his vindictive remembrance of injuries. Otherwise, his anger itself, though violent, excited rather contempt than fear. Like all the Angevins, he was well educated, and rather fond of learning and of learned men. He had sense enough to perceive the value of the one as an instrument of self-interest, and he perhaps respected the others, as among those least likely to come into active conflict with his personal ambition. Like his Angevin

ancestors, also, he was very superstitious, with a scoffing indifference to religion. His ambition was sufficiently great to make him energetic in the assertion of his supposed or real rights and the furtherance of his desires, and he had a large share of the family abilities to assist and support him in this course. He had the quick military eye of his brother Richard, and some of the qualities of a soldier as well as a general. He was a coward rather morally than physically, though his prostration of spirit on some occasions was so abject that it assumed much of the outward appearance of physical timidity also. So completely did the whole nature of the man then seem to grovel, that his unquestionable mental and physical endowments seemed in complete abeyance. He was often cruel, and cruel with the intensity of apprehension. He distrusted all men, because he was too conscious of the evil of his own nature to believe in the possibility of disinterested, and scarcely of interested, good faith in others. The same belief in evil, however, led him to appeal to the weaknesses and selfishness of others, with considerable advantage at particular conjunctures. On this he successfully relied for breaking up several of the combinations against him of his disaffected Barons, and through a more sagacious appeal to this he secured to himself the support of a few—though a very few—staunch friends, and of some of the important municipalities of England. But he also

lost much by his general distrust of good in others, for several times, by acting on his groundless suspicions, he created the very dangers which his violent precautions were meant to guard against. He watched every man nearly as closely as did his father Henry; but he had not the patience to watch long enough, and his action was as excessive in its violence as it was generally premature. Nor did he possess the exhaustless activity of mind and body of his father and brother. When not roused to rapid but fitful movement, he was sunk in indolence and the grossest sensual indulgences. In pursuing these last he had neither self-restraint nor common-sense. The ignobleness of his nature discloses itself here unmistakably. Not content with inflicting the most grievous injuries on the honour of the highest families in the land, he exulted in parading his infamy, and proclaiming publicly with contemptuous and coarse jests the downfall of his victims, and the dishonour of their relations. It was this conduct, far more than any acts of feudal oppression, that enrolled against him that phalanx of Barons to whose exertions, guided by the wiser and nobler counsels of the Primate Langton, we owe *the Magna Charta* of our Constitution. It was, indeed, against the personal character of John, rather than against the system of government which had prevailed more or less ever since the Norman Conquest, that the will of the Nation was at length roused and its liberties

asserted. Not only was John hated more bitterly for the deepest personal wrongs, but there was the most deep-rooted distrust of his good-faith. Dissimulation and treachery were so habitually employed by him as the agents of his policy, that they became blunted and useless weapons in his hands. No one could and no one did at last believe in what he professed, and he lost even the possibility of retracing his steps. He had destroyed all belief in the possibility of his becoming a good king, and he had to submit to the brand of evil which his own conduct had stamped upon his fame.

Among the lower classes, and the inhabitants of some of the towns, who came less into personal contact with him, or who shared in some of his more politic acts of bounty and grace, there were, no doubt, less repugnance to the character of John, and a greater disposition to condone his faults, than among the higher orders, and the large cities such as London. But even here there could be little enthusiasm for a prince who, with all his pecuniary exactions, had lost nearly all the Continental possessions of his family. This, indeed, which perhaps told most against him with the common people, was not regarded with any particular sorrow by the Barons. It had been for some time felt that the acquisition of additional possessions in France, and the overthrow of the House of Capet, might reduce England and the English Barons to a position of decided inferiority,

and it was now felt that the acquisition of the whole of France would add a dangerous weight to the power of the Crown. While the sceptre was wielded by such a man as Richard the Lion-hearted, this feeling of apprehension was almost lost in one of national greatness and glory. But it was instinctively felt that it was not the nation, but the personal position of the King that would be aggrandised with such a man as John; and against this personal aggrandisement there was a general revolt of their feelings as well as their understandings. Never had the national cause or the national honour been the mainspring of the actions of John. Even his greatest act of resolution, his protracted stand against the Papal pretensions, was a mere result of personal pride and resentment, nerved by the popular support. When his own excesses had shaken this support, and he was terrified at the impending French invasion, on a reconciliation with Rome being offered to him at the price of national degradation, he not only made the concession, in which his brother had, to some extent, anticipated him by his homage to the German Emperor, though under peculiar circumstances and for great ends, but seemed to delight in parading the humiliation of the national dignity, while exulting in his own personal deliverance and bettered position. Such a man, his Barons reasoned, should not be made greater through their means. To this personal antipathy, which led to the desertion of

his vassals on more than one critical occasion, the loss of Normandy, the Angevin States, and a large part of Aquitaine was in a great measure due, though the conduct of the King himself, ever vacillating between action and indolence, and between pertinacious assertion of his rights and their sudden and wanton sacrifice, contributed to this fatal result, while it afforded some additional excuse for the conduct of the defaulters. But John himself preferred a mercenary to a feudal force, and this hireling soldiery, while they were more than a match for the retainers of the English Barons, and enabled the King to almost crush the defenders of the Great Charter, often betrayed his interests on the Continent by a sudden desertion to the enemy. Meanwhile, from the land of the Troubadours, came the angry complaint, 'I will make a sharp-edged *sirvente*, which I will send to the King of England, to cover him with shame, which, indeed, he ought to have, if he remembers the deeds of his forefathers, if he compares them with his indolence in thus leaving Poitou and Touraine in the possession of Philip. All Guienne regrets Richard, who spared no treasure to defend it. But this man has no feeling. He loves jousts and hunting, to have hounds and hawks, to drawl on a life without honour, and see himself plundered without resistance. I speak but to correct a King, who loses his subjects because he will not assist them. You, Sire! you suffer your honour to fall into the

mire; and such is your infatuation, that, far from being sensible to reproach, you seem to take pleasure in the invectives with which you are loaded!'

For once the language of the poets of Southern France was but the expression of the bare truth, as well as the echo of the sentiments of John's English subjects. Well, too, had they fathomed the degradation of his character in saying that he could feel no shame. This point alone was wanting to complete the features of this portrait of evil. John was an able man, incapable of using his abilities except to his own destruction; a crafty man without sagacity; a suspicious man without insight; a learned man without wisdom; a rash man without courage; an obstinate man without firmness; a social man without sympathy; and an evil man without shame.

HENRY THE THIRD.

It is not difficult to state the main characteristics of Henry of Winchester. Without being a fool in understanding, he was (perhaps with one exception) the weakest in mental capacity of all the Plantagenets. He was, in himself, in everything, simply insignificant, so far as a very weak man can be insignificant. It is, however, an unfortunate fact that weakness by no means implies powerlessness to do harm to others, but that, on the contrary, it is one of the greatest sources of evil and mischief, though the moral responsibility attaching to the weak-doer himself may be comparatively slight. A very weak man is, by virtue of that very nature, at the mercy of his own imperfect power of judgment, as well as of the mistaken or ill-disposed suggestions of others, and, without any malicious intentions on his own part, perhaps even from a misdirection of good intentions, may destroy the happiness of those who have deserved best at his hands. To deal with such a man is even more dangerous sometimes than to cope with an avowed enemy. Under extremely

favourable circumstances, indeed, and where the opportunities of personal judgment and action are at the *minimum*, and the counsels of good advisers most influential, such a man may pass through life without doing much, or even any mischief, and may leave behind him chiefly the impression created by an amiable disposition, and a kindly wish to act rightly and pleasantly towards all men. But place such a man in a position of power and responsibility, where frequent action is demanded, and sound judgment on men and things is a constantly pressing necessity, and the moral depravation of the character may be incalculable, and the mischievous results to others may be irreparable. Such a position was that of Henry the Third. From his earliest years he was placed in a situation which demanded the exercise of more than ordinary sagacity, and in this quality he was unfortunately entirely wanting. Weak men, who have been thus dangerously forced into action, are divided in the course they pursue into two classes. In the one class the mental incapacity takes the form of overweening self-confidence, and their conduct is consequently marked by a total disregard of the opinion and counsels of everyone else. Perhaps this is the less dangerous class, since we can ascertain with some certainty the tendencies and limits of the incapacity, from our knowledge of the personal character of the self-sufficient fool, and so can guard to some extent against the consequences

of his folly. But there is another class, who are sufficiently conscious of their own incapacity of forming a correct judgment as to any course of action, and who consequently are never happy unless they are consulting and confiding absolutely in other men. If there were any reliance to be placed on the constancy of this dependence, we might, even here, be to a certain extent assured as to the future. But with many of this class the distrust of their own abilities, which leads them to consult and throw themselves on another man, leads them also after a time to distrust their own judgment of that man's capacity for giving them good advice, or his disposition to do so; and then, hastily throwing off their adviser, they repose as implicitly on the suggestions of some new counsellor, to whom their weak nature has been drawn by some chance, or in whose hands they have been persuaded to place themselves by designing intriguers. It is hopeless to attempt to anticipate the course of action of a man so swayed to and fro, and it is quite vain to hope to guard against the consequences of his vacillating confidences. Such a man was Henry the Third. A modern writer says of him:—'Henry spent his life in pitiable alternations between blind confidence and almost ludicrous mistrust. De Burgh, Des Roches, Peter of Rivaulx, Segrave, Montfort, and many more experienced the same treatment,—the result, probably, not so much of caprice, in the common sense

of the word, as of a clinging weakness of character and a conscious inability to estimate the men by whom he was served. A suspicion which he was incapable of forming for himself unnerved his weak judgment when presented by another, and he fancied himself betrayed and undone by the man to whom but an hour before he would have trusted everything.' Henry not only found it impossible to make up his mind on any subject without referring to the counsels of those who swayed him for the time, but he could hardly ever be relied on, even by them, for continuing long in the same resolution. A curious example of this is presented in his matrimonial negotiations. It seemed as if he would never be married. Fair representatives of Brittany, Austria, Bavaria, Bohemia, and the Counts of Bigorre and Ponthieu appeared successively in the field, only to be dismissed again, seemingly without a reason. At last Eleanor of Provence was in the ascendant, and her he ultimately married, her sister, the Queen of France, writing significantly that she will not detain her sister, lest Henry should change his mind.

It is very difficult to estimate the moral rank of such a man. As I have said, it is possible, under peculiar circumstances, that he may be and remain a good man. But it will be seen at once that his incapacity for action may also, not improbably, be indicative of a similar incapacity to resist temptations to evil. How far such deviations from the

right may be conscious and intentional, and how far they may be the results of a sheer incapacity to discern the limits of right and wrong, it is not so easy to decide. Henry was certainly not in his nature an evil-disposed man, like his father John. On the contrary, he appears to have been a kindly, well-meaning man, so far as his blind prejudices and equally blind confidences would allow. He did not probably desire to do anything which he did not for the time fancy that he had a right to do, and he probably never wished to wantonly inflict ill on any man. He preferred doing kind actions to the reverse, and he would always rather think well of a man than the contrary, if his weak, self-distrustful nature, so easily imposed on, would only have allowed him to continue to think well of him. But he might be persuaded to think any evil of any man, and under the influence of this belief, he might be led to commit the grossest injustice, and sometimes (though not so frequently) acts of severe cruelty. His offences, however, against morality lay chiefly in the direction of absence of good faith. He was so constantly untrue to himself, and so often believed, and did one day what he had thoroughly rejected and opposed the previous day, that he seems to have lost all idea of the sanctity or obligations of a solemn promise or a deeply-plighted engagement. A more willing or shameless perjurer there has scarcely ever existed. On this point he had no scruples, and conscience

appeared to be utterly dead. Yet with all his fickleness and falseness, Henry was never hated as his father John was. Men felt at times that he was intolerable, and that he must be deposed, or suspended from the regal functions. But, personally, though he was much despised, he was regarded with the compassionate allowance which manifest weakness of character often inspires in stronger minds, even when the injury suffered from it has been considerable. Henry was subject to violent fits of passion, during which he behaved in the most unkinglike manner. But his resentment after it had expressed itself in the first impulsive act of fury was not of a permanently enduring character. His will was too feeble and changeable to admit of his being lastingly vindictive, and he was spiteful rather than revengeful. Like most of his race he was very superstitious, and he was more really devout, so far as the outward ceremonies of religion were concerned, than most of them. He had a real reverence for sacred things, and men of truly saintly character were always regarded by him with respectful and admiring awe. But he was not restrained from his perjuries or any offences by religious influences, and he had as little scruple in plundering and oppressing the clergy as in the case of the laity. Both alike experienced the evils of his extortions as they did of his general misrule. He was from his very nature incapable of keeping money in his ex-

chequer, and he was equally unscrupulous in the means he employed to replenish his coffers. Like many weak persons, he seems to have had the idea that all men owed certain duties to him, without any reciprocal acts being due on his part. He was made to spend, and they were made to find the money for his expenditure,—and he had a genuine sense of being injured, if his subjects refused to continue to supply his extravagance and foster his misgovernment.

It need not be said that the nature of his government vacillated with the paramount influence to which he was for the time subject. Now it was kept in some degree of order, and made conformable as much as possible to law and justice, under the guardianship of the Earl Marshal and the tutelage of Stephen Langton. Then came the firm, energetic, but somewhat oppressive rule of Pandulf, when for a time England became a dependency, in fact as well as in name, of the Court of Rome. The downfall of this was followed by the ascendancy and just but unbending rule of Hubert de Burgh, on whose overthrow the King, for the first time, was able to indulge his own natural tastes without restraint, and the rule ensued of the Foreign Favourites, which precipitated the civil wars. Yet through all these changes of administration the King's thoughtless and purposeless extravagance exercised a more or less deleterious influence over the course of affairs.

Favouritism is, as I have said, an almost unavoidable imputation against Kings, whose personal friendships must of necessity assume much of that character, and with such a weak man as Henry of Winchester it was only natural that the favouritism should appear in the most undesirable form. He did not, like John, wilfully prefer bad men, but he took men, good or bad, just as they caught his fancy and mastered his understanding. Now it was a Des Roches or a De Valence; now it was De Montfort. But he had a peculiar liking for foreigners as such, in preference to Englishmen or Anglo-Normans. Whether or not owing to the blood he inherited from his mother, Isabella of Angoulême, or to that derived from his grandmother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, he was essentially Aquitainian or Provençal in his cast of mind and his tastes, though it was the Aquitainian type in its feeblest and most degraded form. He was not devoid, indeed, of personal courage, but his whole cast of character was effeminate. The somewhat stern energy of his Anglo-Norman subjects annoyed, and their want of refinement disgusted him, and he sought friends and associates in the Continental school of manners. In accordance with his character, he had not the deep and more serious learning of his Angevin ancestors, and cared little for what we should call *learned* men. But he took much pleasure in poetry and romances, and his devoutness and his æsthetic tastes both found a

noble expression in the Abbey at Westminster. His wife, Eleanor of Provence, was herself a poetess, and a member of a highly accomplished family. Henry may (if he reasoned at all on the matter) have justified his advancement of foreigners to high office in England, by the fact that he was the Sovereign of Continental as well as insular provinces, and that Anglo-Normans ruled for the most part in Guienne and Gascony. There was the important difference, however, that the presence and rule of Englishmen were sought and demanded by the towns of South France as a protection against their own feudal oppressors, while in England town and country alike revolted against the rule of aliens. Yet we cannot wonder at or much blame this partiality of Henry's (to which, indeed, we owe the introduction of the great De Montfort into the field of English politics); but he carried it to such an excess, and showed such a disposition to substitute foreigners for natives in every branch of the Administration, local as well as central, that had it been submitted to, a second Conquest would have been effected, and a second Domesday Book would have been a necessity as well as a project. Of course, the Barons resisted vigorously, though not with continuous concert; and the rest of the reign of Henry, down to the rise of the influence of his son Earl Edward in the administration, was an oscillation between Revolutionary governments and Royal misrule. With the ascendancy

31009

of Earl Edward naturally began a new era in English history, and the personal rule of Henry almost entirely ceased.

Such appears to me to have been the character of Henry of Winchester, with whom sympathies and tastes supplied the place of principles, and self-assertion found its only development in inconstancy. He was too weak a man to be either a good man or a bad man. As a King, he was simply worthless.

EDWARD THE FIRST.

The descent of character from generation to generation is liable to great surprises, and full of strange seeming caprices of nature, but never in the course of history has there been a more singular contrast presented in the characters of a father and son than in the case of Henry the Third and Edward the First. With Henry the intellectual calibre of the Plantagenets seemed to have sunk to the lowest point, just as with John the moral type had been most deeply degraded. With Edward, the intellectual capacity rose again to the highest standard of the family, while morally there was a corresponding and nearly equal elevation of tone. We may safely assign to him the rank of the greatest of our mediæval kings; and if I hesitate in acquiescing in the still higher place which has been claimed for him, of absolutely the greatest of our Kings, it is not on account of any deficiency in the breadth and nobleness of his ultimate ends, but on account of a certain narrowness in his conceptions of social relations which in the latter years of his life became more and more apparent in

the measures to which he had recourse, and which tarnished his reputation with something of the spasmodic violence of unskilful statesmanship. Still, this was only a shortcoming in a truly grand career—an imperfection in an otherwise remarkable combination of mental and moral greatness,—a blot on one of the fairest escutcheons that has ever hung in the armoury of kingly achievements. I feel that to do justice to a character so strong and so distinctly marked in its main features, and yet so complex as a constituent whole, is no easy task; and I give this estimate with some hesitation, and with a sense of being open to misunderstanding on the part of my readers, from the difficulty I have experienced in making the matter clear to my own mind.[1]

Edward succeeded to the throne in the very prime of manhood, not as an untried man, but well known

[1] When the present estimate was composed I had not had the advantage of reading the volume entitled 'The Greatest of the Plantagenets,' the anonymous author of which has recently given us his views in the expanded and more matured form of 'The Life and Reign of Edward the First.' Mr. Pearson, however, whose work I consulted with great advantage to myself, had seen and considered the former of these books, so that I am probably indirectly indebted to it also for the favourable view here taken of Edward's character. While I fully concur in the praise which has been bestowed by most competent judges on the ability of this unknown author, and the obligations to him of all students of English history, I do not feel sufficiently convinced by his arguments to induce me to alter my own estimate on those points on which it differs from his more unreserved praise of the great king intellectually and morally. I have, however, now ventured, on the strength of those arguments, to assign to the first Edward unreservedly the first place among our *mediæval* kings.

(so far as his character had as yet developed itself) to a nation towards which he had performed the two functions of repression and conciliation, and had filled the successive positions of the enemy to insurrection for liberty, and the moderator of a triumphant reaction. He may as well perhaps be introduced to us in the words written after his career was run, but while the memory of his person and the general fashion of his life was still fresh in the minds of Englishmen. A contemporary—John of London—thus describes him in a 'Commemoratio' addressed to Edward's widow, Queen Margaret, and though allowance must be made for flattering exaggeration, the main features of the portrait seem reliable:—'His head spherical, his eyes round, and gentle and dovelike when he was pleased, but fierce as a lion's and sparkling with fire when he was disturbed; his hair black and crisp; his nose prominent and rather raised in the middle. His chest was broad; his arms were agile; his thighs long; his feet arched; his body was firm and fleshy, but not fat. He was so strong and active that with his hand he could leap into his saddle. Passionately fond of hunting, whenever he was not engaged in war he amused his leisure with his dogs and falcons. He was rarely indisposed, and did not lose either his teeth or sight by age. Temperate by habit, he never devoted himself to the luxuries of his palace. He never wore his crown after the day of his coronation, thinking it

rather a burden than an honour. He declined the royal garments of purple, and went about in the plain and common dress of a plebeian. Being once asked why he did not wear richer apparel, he answered, with the consciousness of true greatness, that it was absurd to suppose that he could be more estimable in fine than in simple clothing. No man was more acute in counsel, more fervid in eloquence, more self-possessed in danger, more cautious in prosperity, more firm in adversity. Those whom he once loved he scarcely ever forsook; but he rarely admitted into his favour any that had excited his dislike. His liberalities were magnificent.' It would appear that Edward's hair as a child was of a light yellow colour, but became dark as he grew older. He was considerably above the average height, and very majestic in his bearing. 'His left eye had the same singularity of the oblique fall of the eyebrow which had marked his father's countenance.' His speech was hesitating, but in the fervour of his earnestness it sometimes rose into irresistible eloquence. His personal courage extended to rashness, and even in the chase he wilfully encountered the risk of piercing the stags with his sword when they were seized, instead of using the safer hunting-spear. We do not know anything of the studious and literary side of his daily life, and perhaps in this respect he fell below the average standard of the Plantagenets, but we gather from a casual notice

that he took some pleasure in the perusal of the chivalrous romances of his day. The learning of the cloister, with which several of his ancestors had been conversant, seems to have had as little attraction for him as the clergy themselves had while he yet remained in the unimpaired vigour of his natural capacity. Such was the man in the external features of his life, and with this picture before us, we come to the consideration of the underlying stratum of his personal character.

Edward stands out in contrast to the Sovereigns who had immediately preceded him in the distinctive character of a *Founder*. Since the *Conqueror* there had been no King of England possessing so good a title to that epithet; for though there was much in Henry the Second which belonged to the same type of intellect, yet, owing, no doubt, in part to the peculiar circumstances of his reign, he did not inaugurate any organic change in English society that was so permanently influential as that which we owe to the personal characteristics of Edward. Henry, indeed, re-established social order and a system of administrative justice; but the ideas which lay at the root of his government belonged to a transitional era in civilisation, while those on which the polity of Edward was built up still form constituent elements in our social and political constitution at the present day. If to the Barons in the time of John and Henry the Third we are indebted for the preservation

of the earlier landmarks of our national liberties, and the progressive conservatism of our national spirit, and if to Simon de Montfort in particular we owe the first emphatic recognition of the bases of our representative government, it is to Edward the First that we must in justice refer the first regular operation of our present constitutional system as the established order of things, recognised as such, however unwillingly, by the King as well as by the other bodies of the State. Thenceforward the Constitutional system in England gained a vantage-ground of precedent from which not all the anarchy and misgovernment of succeeding generations were able to dislodge it, and with this reign the history of the 'English Constitution,' as distinctively so called, may be said to begin.

There was much in Edward's character to render him peculiarly qualified to undertake the great office of the inaugurator of a system of government. He combined the excessive regard for prescriptive rights and precedents, which is our national characteristic, with the love of system and the administrative martinetism of our French neighbours. The excessive *legality* of his mind has been remarked upon,[1] and was at once its strength and its weakness. He worshipped precedent, and prescriptive rights found in

[1] I am indebted for my reference to this essential point in the character of Edward to Mr. Pearson, whose sketch of the reign of that King forms the most able portion of his valuable 'History of England.'

him a willing and active supporter; and his administrative system, whether the mere executive of these, or springing from his own conceptions of right, was always clothed most scrupulously in the rigid forms of legal precision. So far as he himself was responsible for this system, it was generally actuated by wise and always by anxiously just intentions, though this justice was not unfrequently lost or dissipated amidst the inexorable logic and unbending formalities of the administrative procedure through which it was sought to carry it out. In this point of view, his mind was almost too constructive, for it rested with a sense of almost equal importance on the symmetry and perfection of the details, and on the main object to be achieved. This respect for precedent, this love of orderly procedure, and this strong sense of justice, were no doubt the results of a reaction in Edward's character from the irregularity of the preceding reign, in which he had been an impatient but not unobservant spectator, and at first a rather turbulent actor. The loose and undisciplined state of society during that reign had faithfully reflected the nerveless and limp constitution of his father's mind. Unstrung both in his moral and intellectual organisation, Henry had been the kindly, well-intentioned agent of manifold injustices, which destroyed that respect for authority which is the foundation of social order. Edward's mind was only too rigidly strung, and in his excessive desire to

prevent licentious irregularities, as well in the administrator as in the subject, he sometimes forgot to allow for the free play of those popular feelings by a regard to which the wisest theory must (to be efficacious) be more or less limited in its mode of operation. But an excess on this side was perhaps called for by the circumstances of the time, and was certainly welcome to a people tired of oscillations between licence and tyranny. The feeling which Edward managed to impress on the mind of the nation, that however severe or even unjust might be the operation of his administrative system, he himself was upright in his intentions and purposes, tended to calm the troubled waters of society, and to establish a sense of permanent legal government, the recollection of which was never again thoroughly lost. There was the great simplicity of true earnestness in the King's desire to do what was right by his people; and this, no doubt, had the effect of taking away from his systematising the uncongenial impersonality which often attends the assertion of orderly law. He was a lawyer in the keen precision of his intellect, but withal a man of strong sensibilities as well as strong personal will. If in one respect he represented in himself the rigid inflexibility of Law, in another his strong personal identification with the Law gave to even his most unsympathising acts something of the effect of a personal contact between his mind and that of each of the subjects of his administration.

Thus while he sank Person in System, he personified System itself, and to obey the Law became a synonym in the minds of all for obedience to Edward.

That his legality and systematising should have been thus blended with intense personality arose, no doubt, from another side of Edward's character—that in which he presents himself to us as a self-willed man, with strong, absolutist tendencies—imperious, impatient of restraints, with all the insensibility to suffering in others of one who is strong in endurance himself. That there was this element—to some extent a conflicting element—in the character of Edward there can be little doubt. It was decidedly in the ascendant during the first and during the last periods of his life—before experience, and the study of his great master and enemy, De Montfort, had sobered him into statesmanship, and again, in advancing age, when bodily infirmities and disappointed scheming had weakened and embittered his mind. But in the prime of his life, which includes the largest portion of his reign, Edward's mind was a happy union of these two strangely-coupled elements, each of which supplemented and corrected the other. He was not quite unbearably systematic, because he was also so strongly personal in his acts. He was not too imperiously absolutist in his ideas, because he had so strong a feeling as to the established rights of others. He was not implacable or unforgiving in many of the great crises of his career, because he

was personally so strong and self-reliant as to scorn the feebleness of revenge on those who were for the time powerless. He had too strong an association in his mind between wise mercy and justice itself to be wantonly or willingly cruel. It is a fact, that if we except the few last years of his life, there is scarcely one, if one, of our English Kings who can compare with the poet's 'ruthless King,' in acts of leniency and repeated forgiveness of injuries. That the fiercer spirit was only chained, not permanently exorcised, became too apparent ere his reign closed; but the provocation which led to the snapping of the restraining bonds had been very great, and while we condemn and deplore the actual outbreak, we must give additional credit to the nobler nature which had so long kept the evil passion impotent. If Scotland can justly cast up against him the treatment of Wallace and the determined ignoring of that national will, which found an organ at last in Robert Bruce, we must remember that there is another side to the tale of the Scotch negotiations, in which Edward appears as the wise and punctiliously scrupulous arbitrator between conflicting factions in that country, called in by all parties, and acknowledged as Suzerain by all who at that time were considered as entitled to a voice in the decision of Scotland's destinies. As far as the barons and clergy of Scotland are concerned, the case of Edward seems irresistibly strong, and we can have as little sympathy, in that point of

view, with Bruce as with Balliol or Comyn, or any other of the selfish semi-feudal and semi-patriarchal chiefs who alternately invited and deceived the English King. It is only when we look at the national feeling of Scotland, as it found vent gradually, first through the rising but little estimated burghs, and then through the leadership of a simple country gentleman, that we feel that our sympathies ought to change sides, and that Edward, in ignoring this feeling, and refusing to see any but unauthorised insurgents outside the pale of feudal law, was carried away by an unfortunate combination of his excessive legality of mind with his imperious spirit, checked as it was at the moment of the realisation of his wise and long-cherished wish for a peaceful consolidation of the two portions of the island. He never succeeded in realising the idea so finely expressed by Wordsworth :—

> The power of armies is a visible thing,
> Formal and circumscribed in time and space ;
> But who the limits of that power shall trace,
> Which a brave people into light can bring,
> Or hide at will,—for freedom combating,
> By just revenge inflamed ?

Wales, which has been a fertile source of invective against Edward, might well instead claim him as her greatest benefactor. So far as he himself is concerned, his conduct towards her and her faithless princes seems to have been unexceptionable, and his leniency towards the conquered and his frequent forgiveness of

the treacheries with which he was requited, are as indisputable as the justice and liberality of his administration of the Principality, when conquered, is confessedly remarkable. That he turned his attention to the consolidation of the island under one system of government, instead of frittering away the national strength on Continental projects, is a great merit, and not the less so because the extent to which he had committed himself to this idea brought on him the severest internal struggle between him and his people that he experienced during his reign. The retention of the province of Guienne had so completely ceased to be an object of national ambition, that when Edward's sense of duty to his Continental subjects called him imperatively to their aid, he was crippled and nearly ruined in his enterprise by the refusal of his feudal vassals to follow him beyond seas, and he found himself, under cover of armed resistance to his demands, compelled at last, though the act was wrung from him as if drawn from his very life-blood, to grant such concessions and make such solid renunciations of illegal practices, that the contest between Constitutionalism and Absolutism in England was closed for his lifetime, and (through the force of the precedent) virtually decided for ever.

The mention of this struggle leads us to the point in Edward's character in which the two sides of it are least easily harmonised. It must be remembered that he had received during his early life a strong bias

against concessions of disputed branches of the Royal prerogative, particularly when attempted to be extorted by force of arms. As a King's son, he in his heart believed in the justice of the pretensions of the Crown in these cases, and willing as he was to concede to other classes their just rights, he was as unwilling to give up what he imagined to be his own. Like a really true man, he resisted the more and the longer because it was his intention to keep the promise he had once made. He did, indeed, more than once infringe on rights which he had virtually promised to respect; but he did so under the strong impulse of national preservation, and when his breach of faith was cast in his teeth by the assembled Barons, he was affected to tears at the imputation on his honour, and excused himself so earnestly, on the plea of the urgency of the necessity, that his deprecatory eloquence moved the hostile gathering not merely to condoning the offence, but to an additional grant of supplies as its constitutional supplement. As a rule, indeed, almost without exception, Edward's promise was kept sacred by him, and, if given with reluctance, might be safely relied upon. And a far greater amount of exaction and severity of administration than his would have been endured, while this safeguard remained assured in the national mind.

Edward, however, failed in one respect (and to this, as I have said, he owed his miscarriage in Scotland) —he had a great respect for *national* opinion where

he understood the nation to be really represented, but none for the popular effervescence which cannot find a legal or constitutional channel, but yet represents forces in the heart of the nation which no wise ruler should disregard. By this irregular outburst of sentiment, both the legal and the absolutist sides of Edward's character were deeply offended. A demagogue and a popular meeting, in our sense of the term, would be equally incomprehensible and detestable to him. He had no excessive love for his feudal vassals, but he respected their legitimate position, as he did that of the civic corporations. But he could not understand or tolerate the position of a Wallace, who had no legal or social *status* as a leader of public opinion in the eyes of the men of that century. He resented this spirit of unauthoritative self-assertion even in the instance of the great Corporation of London, when it seemed to put itself forward as a separate power in the State, and to dictate terms alike to King and Barons. Much more would he resent a less formal representation of popular wishes and feelings. He was in his feelings perhaps the most undemocratic of all our Kings, though the consolidation of popular rights is really owing more to him than to any English Sovereign from the Conquest to the great Civil War.

I have said he loved the clergy but little. Yet he really saved the English Church from entire subserviency to Rome, and ultimately from pecuniary

spoliation by the Holy See. Nor was he less careful of what he considered to be the just rights and interests of the clergy than of any other body of his subjects. But he was determined to destroy for ever the semblance of a dependency of the English Crown on the Court of Rome; he would suffer no co-ordinate authority in England with that of the English law, and he was bent on extending the obligations of law and public service over all clerics equally with all laymen. In this he was supported by the rest of the nation very heartily, and he felt so assured of the isolation of the clergy, and so convinced of the baselessness of their claims to exemption, and of the danger of allowing this insurgent spirit to go uncrushed, that he instructed a knight to address the Convocation in the following terms: 'Reverend fathers, if there be anyone among you who dares to contradict the Royal will, let him stand forth, that his person may be known and noticed as of one who has broken the King's peace.' And on another occasion, a clergyman deputed by his brethren to present their remonstrance to the King died of fright at the awful face of wrath with which the King received him. By the Statute of Mortmain Edward laid the axe to the root of the tree of clerical aggrandisement, and placed an insurmountable barrier to the subjection of the State to the Church, which at one time seemed imminent.

In his expulsion of the Jews, Edward did not rise

above, but he faithfully represented, the wishes of all classes of his subjects; and if the act detracts from his reputation on a wider platform, it cannot be said to have sprung from any special or exceptional characteristic of his own. He may have hated them always, as a zealous Crusader; but as a King he showed no exceptional animosity towards them; indeed, he raised the murmurs of his subjects by alleviating, to the utmost of his power, the circumstances of their banishment; and by that banishment he, as King, lost a great amount of extraordinary and indefinite contributions of money.

The private life of Edward, at least from the time he attained manhood, was pure and high-toned. It is recorded that in his youth he loved to gather around him some of the free-lances and loose buckler-companions of those disordered times, and gave them great licence. This, perhaps, was the origin of the stories of his rencontres and personal contests and courtesies with Robin Hood and other outlaws of popular fame. But as a husband Edward's relations were happy and truly worthy of his great character. His first wife, a Castilian princess, was one of the best and most devoted of those who have borne the title of Queen, and the affection of that stern and resolute man towards her was as deep and enduring. But the nature which was not too stern to be full of gentle affection towards a high-minded wife became, unfortunately, hard and unsympathetic towards an unworthy and

effeminate son, and England probably suffered not a little from those passionate outbursts of indignation which destroyed all confidence between father and son, and hence all influence for good on the character of the latter.

I have endeavoured to point to some leading aspects of the character of Edward the First, but his mind was so many-sided that I cannot hope to have fully expressed the Man, although I may have given some idea of the King. He has been frequently called the English Justinian, and he certainly combined in himself the presence and strong will of an Emperor with the instincts and genius of a Legislative Founder.

EDWARD THE SECOND.

ONCE more the greatness of the House of Plantagenet, which had grown to such dimensions under the first Edward, was destined to dwindle, if not to the proportions of the third Henry, at least to those of decided mediocrity. Edward of Caernarvon, as he was distinctively called, was not an essentially feeble character, but a feeble and bad copy of a higher type of mind. The handsome face, not unpleasing in itself, but made unattractive by its unmeaning and almost vacant expression, was the index of a character in which considerable abilities, strong feelings, and refining tastes were neutralised or distorted into gross defects, by the absence not only of all high motive, but of all significant purpose. There must have been from the first some essential ingredient wanting in the composition of Edward, but there can be no doubt that the natural deficiency was aggravated by the circumstances of his early life. Great men and strong men are not, as a rule, the most happy in the management of their children. Either they have too decided theories, or they have

too limited sympathies, to accommodate themselves to the demands and shortcomings of domestic life. They either cannot tolerate the insubordination of their own flesh and blood to their own peculiar ideas, or presume on the existence in their offspring of instincts of greatness and thoughtfulness, the former of which are rare in young or old, and the latter of which are incompatible with the characteristics of all but a very exceptional childhood. Edward the First, though a stern man from the gravity of his character, was not an unkindly man in his personal relations; and his conduct towards his son, in *early* years, however injudicious, was not such as to challenge criticism on the ground of undue severity. Young Edward was left without the care of a mother at a very early age, and although he seems to have suffered less in some respects from that loss than many do, in consequence of the kindly and sympathising treatment he experienced from his stepmother, there can be little doubt that in the death of Eleanor of Castile he lost that delicate and discriminating good-sense and that elevated tone which no mere sympathy and affection can replace. His father, too, in the yearning agony of his own deeply felt loss, seems to have sought relief in surrounding the orphan child with every luxury and indulgence that his own stately ideas of the royal position could suggest. He made the young prince the centre of a little Court, as brilliant in its exterior as he vainly

believed it was elevating in its internal influences. He wished his son to feel like a king, so he brought him up in a life of kingly magnificence. The character of young Edward was eminently one to deceive a prepossessed spectator, such as a father naturally is, as to his real bent and capacity. As I have said, he was an imperfect imitation of something much greater and better; and any such indications of character, however slight and transient, would arrest the attention and be exaggerated in the mind of a paternal theorist. He would recognise in his son the symptoms of many of his own early feelings, before experience had strengthened and modified them; and remembering how his own self-reliant character had ripened and expanded under the most unfavourable circumstances, he might well believe that a character which seemed to indicate such points of similarity would similarly grow up to perfection under more auspicious influences. Perhaps he was not unconscious of the too great tension, not to say hardness, of his own mind, and attributing this to the severity of the school of discipline to which he had been subjected, sought to soften its tone in his young son. His plan seems to have been to place around young Edward those who would control but sympathise with his tastes, to maintain a watchful eye over the general expenditure of the household, but leave everything else to the operation of natural character. The result was that the Prince, surrounded

by pliant flatterers, who were afraid probably to mortify the King by telling him the real character of his son, lost all idea of self-discipline, and allowed his mind to fall into a perfect chaos of imperfect sympathies, unfulfilled plans, inordinate fancies, and wilful irresolution and vacillation. When this character at last displayed itself in its true colours to the undeceived father, the result was a violent reaction from blind confidence to extreme reprobation, to which disappointment and wounded pride gave additional bitterness. The insolent *insouciance* with which young Edward paraded his vices before his father's eyes, as well as the public, and the cool effrontery with which he preferred his most unpalatable requests to the King himself, stung the latter into a frenzy of rage, and destroyed all chance of a mutual understanding. His favourite tastes were music and horses, but no taste and no object seemed to have a paramount or abiding hold on his mind. He was always changing his plans and his wishes, and the only thing in which he appeared to exhibit any constancy was in his attachment to persons. On those to whom he once took a fancy it seemed as if his wandering mind concentrated itself with a fixed intensity in proportion to his general levity. Nothing was too great a favour to be bestowed on them, and the idea of any limits or proportions to his favouritism seems to have been wholly wanting. It appeared as if the penury of

friendship in which a long line of ancestors had lived was to be expiated by a plethora of the relation in its most unwholesome quality. Whether the favoured objects of this princely affection were originally unworthy or not, they seem to have all become tainted with the same evil results of favouritism, — excessive and insolent arrogance, and unbridled covetousness and licence. There was much in the character of Piers Gaveston, the chief favourite of Edward's earlier years, which might under happier auspices have ripened into something much nobler. He had considerable abilities, though seemingly little depth of character; and he had all the accomplishments of the day in an eminent degree, and, at any rate, an *external* refinement of manners above that of the surrounding nobility. But he became, under the influence of this unbridled favouritism, so intolerable that his ultimate murder (for it was little better) excited no commiseration except in his bereaved friend and master. So it was with the younger Le Despenser, who succeeded to this post of head-favourite. One example of the relation in which the reigning favourite stood to the King and his subjects will suffice as an illustration of the whole subject. Walter de Whytlesee, one of the monks of Peterborough, tells us that when the King, with Gaveston, visited that place, the abbot sent him a cup worth fifty pounds. The King immediately inquired whether Piers had

received any present, and being answered in the negative, he refused to accept the gift. The abbot, hearing of this, sent to Gaveston a cup of the value of forty pounds, who took it with a courteous air and thanks. The messenger then asking the favourite if the other cup was worthy of the King's acceptance, and being told it was, mentioned to Piers that it had been refused. Gaveston called his chamberlain, and gave him these orders,—'Go to Lord Edward, and tell him that I am willing he should receive the abbot's present.' The officer carried the rejected cup to Edward with this message, and the King then eagerly took it, and thanked the abbot for his liberality.

Gaveston, at least, may be said to have wilfully thrown away one of the greatest chances of reconciling the favour of the King with the good-will of the people that was ever offered to a Royal favourite, for his first offences had been so far condoned by the Barons, that a contemporary historian, singularly thoughtful and unprejudiced, in his judgments, declares it to be his decided opinion, that if the favourite had thenceforth conducted himself prudently and unostentatiously, or if the King, preserving his attachment to his friend, had conducted himself with due consideration to his nobles, their opposition would have ceased. For the favouritism of Edward was attended with this unfortunate accompaniment, that he could not show his

affection for one man without exhibiting insolent contempt towards another. It seemed as if it needed this foil of counter-ill-treatment of others to complete his feeling of perfect friendship towards any one. And unluckily his dislike generally manifested itself towards those of high rank, just as his preferences were in the greater number of instances (when he was left to his own choice) for those in a low class of life. Gaveston was, indeed, the son of a Gascon gentleman, and Despenser of an English baron; but these had been first placed about his person, the one by the old King himself, the other by the Barons from among themselves, as a safe person to engage the King's fancy. But his other favourite associates from his early years appear to have been born of a very low class, and in his converse with them Edward seems to have lost all sense of decorum, and of the reserve due to his royal and even his personal dignity. The 'minstrels' and idle persons with whom as a youth he surrounded himself, found a counterpart in his later years in the 'mariners' and rough and lawless people whose society he was accused of frequenting overmuch. He thus debased in the eyes of the nation two of his most blameless tastes,—his passion for music, and his love of ships and of the sea. It seemed as if he could not endure that anyone should enjoy a recognised position of dignity which was not derived from his own favour, and he revenged himself on

hereditary rank by ostentatiously preferring plebeian company and parvenus. The Barons of England, whom a great King had not been able to overbear by his imperial force of character, were not likely to endure patiently insults such as these from one whose tastes they could not appreciate, and whose whole character they thoroughly despised. It is hardly worth while to discuss the question of the amount of truthfulness possessed by Edward. He looked on promises as mere coin of the realm in which he might pay his debts or buy off opposition, and which when necessary he lavished freely, without regard to the past or the future. It is probable that his moral sensibilities were never sufficiently alive to the nature of truth to make his violations of it a serious moral crime in him. He was simply a liar when it suited him, just as he told the truth when a lie was not necessary. Except in the prior order in which perhaps it suggested itself to his mind, truth had probably with him no preference.

The word *frivolous*, perhaps, expresses most exactly the stamp of Edward the Second's mind. His fitful energy, such as it was, never inspired any feeling of respect in friends or adversaries. He was personally brave, without gaining any of the reputation attaching to physical courage; he was generous, without creating an abiding sense of grateful obligation, and lavish without giving the impression of magnificence; he was excessive and

persistent in his friendships, without securing in his favourites that respect which is the essential basis of true friendship; his activity, though considerable when he was once roused, never effaced the general impression of his indolent apathy; his greatest concessions and personal sacrifices to the demands of his subjects or of the occasion were so manifestly unreal, that they never produced the effect of solemn guarantees; his most harmless and praiseworthy tastes became occasions of scornful criticism by the manner in which he pursued them, and his natural perceptions of a social refinement superior to the hardy but coarse habits of life prevalent among his baronial aristocracy were robbed of much of their essential delicacy, and of nearly all their effective influence over others, by being associated with pursuits of a low or, at any rate, undignified character. From the first, Edward appears to have formed no definite plan of life, except one of self-enjoyment for the passing hour. He had no foresight, and made no attempt to think beforehand, except when animated by the impulses of eager desire for fresh pleasures, or an intense thirst for revenge. For his mind, loosely knit in other points, was capable of retaining implacable resentments. He confounded the love of peace with indolence, refinement with luxury, independence with self-indulgence, and a strong administration with the destruction of all opponents of his free exercise of a

wanton will. He seemed to have been born to throw discredit on possible virtues, even more than to point the moral of positive vices. His character was full of suggestions of something better, and occasionally of something great; but it contained no realisation of anything. If the kindliness of Henry the Third's character saved him from the dislike which many of his actions merited, this dislike was called forth and deepened continually in the mind of the nation towards Edward the Second by the very buoyancy of his temperament. It must have seemed to them that a Prince who could treat life and sovereignty with such gay levity, was not entitled to the allowance which might be made for those who acted erroneously or even unjustly under a more solemn sense of the weight of their responsibility. A mere trifler who violates national rights, outrages national sentiments, and executes national champions, must not expect to inspire even the ordinary respect of hatred. A feeling of contemptuous aversion and disgust became predominant throughout England, which seemed to clamour for a punishment ignominious in its cruelty. The King who degraded the royal dignity by low companionships and undue familiarities[1] perished himself, at length, from the

[1] It has been suggested to me since I wrote the above, that the *peculiar* detestation with which the memory of Edward the Second was regarded in his own times, sprang in a great measure from the popular belief in the criminal character of his relations with his favourites. I

destruction in the people of all respect for the Royal person. And so it was that, without being by any means the worst of our English Kings, so far as respects actual moral delinquency, Edward the Second went to his grave less regretted and less respected probably than any King before or after him. It is enough condemnation of him to say that he was his father's son, and yet that he died hated and despised by the English nation.

fail however to discover, in the tone in which this offence is referred to in the writers of that age, any sufficient support to this explanation.

EDWARD THE THIRD.

Few English kings have left behind them so great a reputation in the chroniclers, and yet few kings are so slightly delineated in their personal characteristics as Edward the Third. Everybody thinks of him as a sort of impersonation of the spirit of chivalry, but beyond this, few, I believe, have any definite ideas concerning him, and beyond this the chroniclers themselves preserve to us but few traits. Their antithetical summaries of his character are but faintly discriminating panegyrics, which approach too much to the nature of tombstone memorials to be very useful in an analysis of the *man*, though they may give us some general idea of his stamp as a *king*. And it is, in fact, only through a consideration of his kingly qualities that we can at all deduce any idea of the personal character of Edward. He began to reign with the cares at least, if not the responsibilities of a ruler, from his very boyhood, and his personal life was so interwoven with that of the nation, that to separate the two is impossible, until the shadows of his last melancholy years obscure the kingly presence, and leave only the wretched

and common-place picture of a doting and disreputable old man. His reputation, which was for so many centuries looked upon as an integral part of the national treasury of glory, has of late years suffered a considerable diminution in the estimates of historians,[1] and I am inclined to think to a somewhat unjust extent; for, though I am not disposed to dispute the truth of the verdict which displaces him from the pinnacle he so long occupied as the greatest of our kings, I still think that a character may be safely assigned to him which places him decidedly above the average of English Royalty. The modern reaction against mere military glory, and the idea that Edward engaged in his French and Scotch wars through ambition or mere love of fighting, and was himself nothing more than a brave knight, have, I believe, carried away some able writers from a wider and fairer consideration of his qualities, and have reduced their estimate to something like a sermon against selfish ambition and bloodshed.

Edward the Third's character stands in a very remarkable relation as well as contrast to that of his father. Edward the Second, as we have already seen, was a bad copy and imperfect realisation of

[1] This was written before I had read Mr. Freeman's unfavourable estimate of Edward lately republished in his collected essays. This able paper, which represents a view of the character which I had once myself adopted, does not alter my later judgment, which was formed on a more careful and minute consideration of the facts.

a fine character. In Edward the Third the copy was successfully achieved, and the conception was realised, but the substratum of character was much the same in both. In both the æsthetic and sensuous elements were predominant,—the love of pomp and luxury, the pleasure of outward display, and the appreciation of what are considered the refinements and mere ornaments of life. In the character of each there was latent a feeling that the King should be the social leader of the nation he governed, even more than her commander in war and her administrator in peace. In neither of them was there the originality or the incisive force of Edward the First. The character of both was moulded to a considerable extent by external circumstances, from which, however, one alone drew lessons of wise experience. All three were capable of committing great acts of cruelty, but the cruelty which in the First Edward resulted from an outburst of ungovernable fury in a forgiving nature, was in his two successors the dictate of a settled resentment, which in the Second Edward was furtive yet implacable, in the Third Edward was open and hard to be appeased. But in the Third Edward the pageant and pomp of life rose into a stately magnificence, contrasting with, but not unworthy of comparison with, the simpler stateliness of his grandfather, and far above the tinsel of his wretched father. His luxurious tendencies were for the greater part of his life relieved from reproach and ennobled by

being associated with great purposes and energetic enterprises. He made himself the social centre, not of a little set of unworthy favourites, but (in all but his closing years) of the entire nation, which he refined without demoralising. His æsthetic tastes found vent in great architectural achievements, and his natural courtesy of demeanour never sank into undue familiarity, but preserved the character of dignified though easy condescension. He, in fact, was a high-bred gentleman in every sense of the term. But the decay of his faculties disclosed the inherent similarity in the tone of character between father and son, and the decline of Edward the Third approximated to the prime of Edward the Second.

The personal appearance of Edward the Third corresponded to his type of character. He had not indeed the physical presence of his grandfather, for he was not above the middle height, yet such was the dignity of his bearing that contemporaries seem to have been equally impressed. He did not inspire awe, but he secured admiration and respect. He must have been very attractive, and his countenance appears to have fascinated spectators. He had handsome features, like his father, but they were animated with the most expressive and noble sweetness. His panegyrists speak of his expression as *divine*, and we may well conceive that the union of lofty courtesy and genial brightness in his looks exercised a spell over those around him which may

partly justify this flattering exaggeration of language. We are told that he loved hunting and hawking, but his favourite recreations from the cares of royalty were the chivalrous and martial exercises of the period—tournaments—in which he was himself a most accomplished proficient. Again and again, when the vizor of the successful champion was raised at the conclusion of the contest, the assembled crowds were excited to fresh enthusiasm by discovering that the unknown knight was no other than the King himself. And tournaments had a bearing and value much beyond the mere exhibition of a childish pageant. They brought together all classes of society, and bound them, for the time at least, in a connecting link of common tastes and enjoyments. The King emerged from his palace, the great baron left the dismal seclusion of his feudal castle, the citizen quitted his workshop, and the peasant abandoned his plough, and all met together on the same platform of a common enjoyment and a common expectation. Such bonds of society were especially valuable in an age emerging from an exclusive and oligarchical feudalism, and passing into a state of society of which wealth and hereditary rank were the bases, in place of military tenures. It was this transitional character which imparted its charm to the age of chivalry, for while it retained all the romance of arms, it blended with this many of the softer and more graceful features of a higher civilisa-

tion. The rules of courtesy and the obligations of humanity were still indeed placed on a very limited basis, so far as class distinctions were concerned, and the ideas which were inculcated by this code were often fantastic and extravagant; but the tree once planted, however unsteadily, soon became fixed in the earth, and spreading its roots far and wide, passed beyond the limits of one soil, and drew from this more varied nurture a more luxuriant and a healthier growth.

But Edward the Third was not only in sympathy with, but beyond his age in this point of view. He represented faithfully, as I have said, the spirit of chivalry; but he also anticipated, to some extent, the predominant feeling of the age which chivalry was ushering in. He did not, it is true, like his father, seek to gratify his sociable tendencies by descending to familiar intercourse with men of low rank and habits; on the contrary, he made companions and associates, in peace as well as in war, of his great Barons and their sons; and he thus broke more effectually the strength of the feudal array, by drawing its members away from the independence of their local territorial influence, than his predecessors had ever been able to do by force or by fraud. The great Baron, who previously prided himself on being bound to the Crown only by strictly-defined feudal obligations, was now comparatively powerless under the spell of personal association with the King and

common sympathies and aspirations. Attendance on the royal wars was no longer the grudging discharge of a tax upon property, but the opening of a field of distinction on which, by personal feats, a European reputation might be established far excelling the narrow pride of a local baronial position. But Edward did not contract his sympathies to the limits of this baronial companionship, but gratified his hereditary predilections by also associating himself, without losing his due position, with the mass of the population, and especially with the middle-class. He lived in public, in the sight of the nation, seeing habitually and exchanging courtesies with all classes, without lowering himself to the rank of any, though he naturally preferred the closer and more congenial companionship of the higher classes. His urbanity and his accessibility are spoken of in marked tones by the chroniclers, and from those qualities, after all, was derived the great reputation which descended to posterity in connection with his name. But beyond this, he has the merit of perceiving the rising influence of the middle-class, and of interesting himself warmly in the progress of its commercial prosperity. He fostered the establishment of commercial guilds and companies, granted fresh privileges to civic corporations, and regulated his foreign alliances to a considerable extent by considerations of commercial advantage. The foreign commerce of England was protected by the assem-

blage of formidable fleets; the complaints against or on behalf of English merchant ships became a prominent feature in international negotiations, and the rivalries of English and foreign commerce became an important element in the national policy. Again, though Edward's personal associates were of the aristocratic class, he turned for support in his government, and he recognised a responsibility in his administration to the middle-classes, as represented in the House of Commons, and especially to the representatives of the boroughs. He anticipated the Tudors in making, if possible, Parliament the accomplice in his public acts, and he sought even to engage their complicity in his foreign policy by an artful appeal for their advice, which the wise Commons respectfully declined to give. He recognised in the House of Commons the dominant element in the Parliament. He did not seek to crush the other orders; on the contrary, he recognised them all in their several spheres of influence; but Parliament he recognised as the especial sphere of the middle-classes, and he respected and negotiated with them here accordingly. During the reign of Edward the Second the struggle had been mainly between the Crown and the feudal Barons, and Parliament had been little else than a conclave of armed vassals of the Crown, who browbeat others or were browbeaten in their turn by an attendance of armed retainers. But in the reign of Edward the Third—

though (especially towards the close of his reign) the struggle between prerogative and liberty was nearly as vivid—the scene of contest was the floor of the House of Commons, and the King and the Barons were but accessories, or at best leaders, in struggles in which the benches of the House of Commons were canvassed by both parties for the decision of the quarrel. Edward the First had so far recognised the coming times as to collect irregular and special little parliaments of traders and employers of labour, to give him advice on matters connected with their pursuits, and to assess for him his extraordinary taxation. But *taxation* had been so palpably the main object of these appeals, that the middle-class was very shy of responding to them. Edward the Third pursued the same policy, but he made it also the guiding rule of Royal proclamations and of the enactments which his Ministers proposed in Parliament, and he assigned to the middle-class an authority on national as well as special legislation. He had the wisdom to encourage all corporate representations of the middle-class, and to recognise in them a conservative instead of a subversive element of government. He thus (as long as his mind remained unimpaired) rendered himself the King of the middle-classes as much as of the nobles; and he based his national militia quite as much on the one as on the other. The craftsmen and yeomen of England were not, as in France, the mere supernumeraries of the

army, but its substantial strength. To have seen and acted thus is not the characteristic of a mere Knight-Errant, and however great may have been the shortcomings of Edward in other respects, the basis of his character must be widened to allow for this broader statesmanship.

The pages of Froissart and the other chroniclers of this period are so full of illustrations of the chivalric qualities of Edward the Third, and also of the less pleasing manifestations of a temperament in which the severer tone of Edward the First supersedes for a time the gentler features of his grandson's mind, that I should only weary my readers by the repetition. The scene after the taking of Calais is well known, and the latest and most conscientious historian of Edward[1] is inclined to adopt Froissart's version of the intended cruelty and sudden relenting of that King on the intercession of his Queen. Another story, less familiar to the general reader, though also told by Froissart, supports the truth of this representation of Edward's character. The King of France having caused some lords who had been taken and exchanged by the English to be executed on suspicion of treason, Edward determined to retaliate upon Sir Hervé de Léon, his prisoner, and would have done so, if the Earl of Derby had not thus remonstrated: 'My Lord! if that King Philip has rashly had the villany to put to death such valiant knights as

[1] Mr. William Longman.

these, do not suffer your courage to be tainted by it; for in truth, your prisoner has nothing to do with this outrage. Have the goodness, then, to give him his liberty at a reasonable ransom.' The King ordered the captive knight to be brought before him, and said, 'Ha! Sir Hervé! Sir Hervé! my adversary, Philip de Valois, has shown his treachery in too cruel a manner when he put to death so many knights. It has given me much displeasure, and it appears as if it were done in despite of us. If I were to take his conduct for my example, I ought to do the like to you, for you have done me more harm in Brittany than any other. But I shall bear it, and let him act according to his own will. I will preserve my own honour unspotted, and will allow you your liberty at a trifling ransom, out of my love for the Earl of Derby, who has requested it, but upon condition that you perform what I am going to ask of you.' The Knight replied, 'Dear Sire! I will do to the best of my power, whatever you shall command.' The King said, 'I know, Sir Hervé, that you are one of the richest knights in Brittany, and that if I were to press you, you would pay me 30,000 or 40,000 crowns for your ransom. But you shall go to King Philip de Valois, my adversary, and tell him from me, that by putting so many knights to death in such a dishonourable manner, he has sore displeased me; that I say and maintain that he has by these means broken the truce he had agreed to; that from this

moment I consider it to be broken, and that I send him by you my defiance. In consideration of your carrying this message, I will let you off for 10,000 crowns, which you will send to Bruges in five days after you shall have crossed the sea. You will also inform all such knights and esquires as wish to attend my feast not to keep away on this account, as we shall be right glad to see them, and they shall have passports for their safe return, to last for fifteen days after it shall be over.' The Knight gladly undertook and punctually performed the royal message. This is in itself a picture of Edward which needs no comment.

His veracity is open to some question, for it seems to have been too much dependent on the technical rules of chivalry, and to have been less an instinct of his own mind than was the case with his grandfather. But if he fell below the latter in this respect, he certainly rose far above his father in habitual sincerity, and the actual deficiency was perhaps as much one of temperament as of conscious untruthfulness. He neither rose much above nor fell beneath his predecessors in his resort to illegal measures, but he was wiser than several of them in recognising the expediency of timely retractation and concession. He was perhaps a more faithful personal friend than a just and constant master to his Ministers of State. He was evidently deficient in a keen instinct of justice, but he was not often wantonly

unjust; and if not quite a reliable, he was generally a kindly master and administrator.

His foreign policy has been much blamed, and the terrible error of claiming the Crown of France into which his enterprising and warlike spirit betrayed him showed a great falling-off from the better policy of Edward the First. But even this had the recommendation that it served as a vent to the warlike turbulence of his Barons, and buried the remembrance of civil discords and enmities under an accumulation of common national glories. Nor, considering the aggressive policy of the French Kings towards the English possessions in France, was it a gratuitously offensive policy. It might well appear to be a case in which there was no medium between giving up everything and claiming everything, in order to obtain a fair compromise; and had the peace of Bretigni proved a more permanent settlement of the question, some might perhaps praise what they now condemn. As respects Scotland, Edward did but follow in the steps of his grandfather, and wiser than the latter, perhaps from the greater pliancy of his nature, he learned at last and adopted the true policy towards that country.

Of the last years of this remarkable King I have already spoken. His grandfather's mind had also exhibited signs of decay a few years before the close of his reign; but then Edward the First attained the age of sixty-eight, while his grandson died before he

had completed his sixty-fifth year. Both were called upon to assume a leading and active part in public affairs prematurely, and in both, in consequence, there was a premature exhaustion. But, in the case of Edward the First, the decay soon ended in death, while it continued with his grandson until scarcely a vestige was left of his great reputation, and he had become a mere puppet, scarcely responsible for his actions, in the hands of designing men, and an insolent and greedy woman. But his character must in justice be estimated by reference to his earlier years, when his mind was both vigorous and mature, and he will not then probably be judged wholly unworthy of the title of the greatest Royal leader of the *whole* of English society, as well as the first hero-King of the *whole* English nation.

RICHARD THE SECOND.

To the dotage of a once great King succeeded the minority of a boy in the eleventh year of his age, and to a reign which (notwithstanding its melancholy close) had been, as a whole, one of the most brilliant in our annals, succeeded a period which must be pronounced as one of the least reputable of any as respects the conduct of both King and People. The contemporary poet, Gower, having before his eyes the actual state of England, thus contrasts with it the true ideal of government:—

> For all reason wolde this;
> That unto him which the head is,
> The members buxome shall bowe:
> And he shulde eke their truth alowe.
> With all his herte, and make them chere,
> For good counsell is good to here.
> Although a man be wise hymselve,
> Yet is the wisdom more of twelve.

Never has there been a time when this wise counsel of the poet's was more needed or more completely disregarded. Nowhere in English history is there a period in which we are so compelled by justice to

look with almost equal disapprobation on the conduct of *all* political parties, and at no time has the national character appeared to so little advantage. The King would listen to no wise counsel, the great men would pay no reverence to his person, and the mass of society was turbulent and anarchic to an extent almost unprecedented in this country. The political morality of all seemed to have degenerated, and the disgraceful vicissitudes of violence and subservience in both King and People should always prevent any student of our history from declaiming against the conduct of other nations, and dogmatically pronouncing it an indisputable proof of their incapacity for self-government or for any settled government at all.

The best excuse for the conduct of Englishmen at this epoch lies in the unfortunate circumstances under which this reign commenced, and under the influence of which the relations of King and People were first formed. A child succeeded to a great reputation, but also to an inheritance of disaster; a People to the recent memory of triumphant success, and to the present shame of helpless and ignominious discomfiture. Richard was the grandson and son of the heroes of Crecy and Poictiers, and he succeeded to the government of a country whose shores were devastated by the hostile fleets of that people to the sovereignty of whom his predecessor had laid claim, and a large part of whom he had

actually succeeded in temporarily reducing under his authority. The elder Edward had died in discreditable obscurity, the younger had preceded him to the grave broken down by disease and disappointment. The nation, one-third of whose population had been swept away by pestilence, and which had been drained of its best blood by the demands of military service, and straitened, if not impoverished, by frequent exactions of money, was demoralised by long-continued and latterly disastrous warfare, and had lost its self-respect, as well as all respect for constituted authorities. The old standard of faith had been shaken by the preaching of the Lollards, without the firm establishment of a new one, and the mind of the nation at large had been leavened rather with a distrust of all government and all social institutions than with any higher conceptions of right and order. The religious movement had taken a social turn, and the lower orders were awakening not only to a sense of their state of servitude, but to a conception of the spirit of Christianity wholly at variance with the distinctions of rank and class as well as with the exclusive canons of chivalry. Thus the demoralisation of the upper and middle classes was coeval with the first blind and blundering steps into freedom and self-respect of their long down-trodden and despised serfs; and the representatives and standards of social order and authority were never less likely to command respect, than when that

respect was most needful to preserve both law and society from a terrible overthrow. The nobles, more and more abandoning the military career—now no longer a field of glory and gain—were thrown back on political intrigues and the desire of personal aggrandisement at home, and they found only too tempting an opening for their ambition in the feeble rule of a minor, surrounded by ambitious uncles, and with no wise or efficient ministers to shape his policy or form his character.

Under such unfavourable auspices, the son of the Black Prince grew up from boyhood to youth and manhood, and these circumstances must have had more than common influence over a character naturally possessing many elements of both good and evil. Had the men placed at the side of young Richard in his early years been such as to command his inward respect, as well as to enforce his outward acquiescence in their advice, and had the Parliamentary *régime* which the last reign had inaugurated, and to which the circumstances of his minority necessarily gave additional power and vigour been steady and moderate, the worst tendencies in the King's character might never have fully developed themselves, and the stronger and finer sides of his mind might have predominated. But exactly the reverse was the case. A contemporary chronicler, quoted by Sharon Turner, gives the following description of Richard's person and habits.

'He was of the common size, yellowish hair, his face fair and rosy, rather round than long, and sometimes diseased; brief and rather stammering in his speech. In manners unsettled, and too apt to prefer young friends to the advice of his elder nobles. He was prodigal in his gifts, and extravagantly splendid in his dress and banquets, but timid in war; very passionate towards his domestics, arrogant, and too much devoted to voluptuous luxury. So fond of late hours, that he would sometimes sit up all night drinking. Heavily taxing his people, scarcely any year passed in which he did not get grants of fifteenths, which were consumed as soon as they reached his treasury. Yet there were many laudable features in his character: he loved Religion and the Clergy; he encouraged architecture; he built Westminster almost entirely, and the Carthusian Monastery near Coventry, and the Dominican at Langley.' His character was not one which it is easy to explain satisfactorily, for the seeming contradictions in it are such that we are almost left (with our scanty materials) to a doubtful alternative of styling him either an energetic tyrant or a weak voluptuary. In fact, he had in him the elements of both, combined with a fitful and inconstant sense of right. He was the victim of early dictation; he had been goaded by it into an intolerance of all advice and all restraint. He was made the involuntary mouthpiece of one ambitious man after another, each

claiming his obedience on the ground of superior age and hereditary position in the State, and none commanding it by the respect inspired by their own character, until he hated all but young men, believed in the wisdom of young men only, and thought that the only security for the devotion of such to himself was the obligation under which they laboured of owing their great position to his favour alone. The Houses of Parliament, which might have mitigated the mismanagement of his advisers, instead of merely controlling the Administration and restraining the extravagant tastes of the young King by a constant but moderate supervision, and at the same time upholding the royal dignity against the encroachments of nobles and ministers, abused their newly acquired prerogatives, and made constitutional government hateful to Richard by associating it merely with antagonism to all his wishes and disrespect to his person. Nor was his a character for which such rude schooling was at all appropriate. He possessed, it is true, the luxurious constitution of the Second and Third Edwards, and not a little of the wilful selfishness of the former of these princes, but combined with these were a fierceness of temper and persistence of purpose more resembling his father or the First Edward. His luxurious tastes, if his advisers had been more sagacious and congenial, might have risen to magnificence, instead of degenerating into lavish and indiscriminate extrava-

gance. If in his excessive love of making elegant presents he gave his uncle Lancaster, when the latter went to Spain, a golden crown, and his duchess another; if, notwithstanding the necessities of his treasury, he spent on his marriage 300,000 marks, besides the costly presents he made; and if he presented Leo, the King of Armenia, when he came to England, with a thousand marks of gold in a gilt ship, with the grant of a pension of the same sum yearly, it is the disproportion rather than the inappropriateness of the profusion which we must condemn, and his expenditure was narrowed in its scope and lowered in its stamp by the attempt to deprive him of his legitimate authority as a Sovereign. In consequence of the ill-judged character of the interference, young Richard came to associate extravagance with freedom of action, and seems to have acted rightly only when the advice of the constituted counsellors of the Crown had not been proffered to that effect. Thus, in Ireland, where the authority and advice of Parliament and the Council of Peers were comparatively in abeyance, the King seems to have executed impartial justice to the best of his power, and to have redressed grievances and enforced order. His mind possessed too much natural vigour to be tamely acquiescent under the subservience in which he had been brought up. He was a voluptuary, but he was not satisfied with the mere pleasures of a voluptuary, without power or

position in the State. He wanted to assert his power not so much, probably, for the sake of being able to abuse it, as from a desire for free agency. But however eager to be emancipated from control, he had the patience to wait his opportunity, the wit and cunning to dissimulate, as well as the promptitude to act when he thought the moment had arrived. His presence of mind on the occasion of the Wat Tyler insurrection might have warned the Magnates of Parliament that they were not dealing with a contemptible adversary, and might have led them to come to a timely understanding with him. But the warning proved vain, and blinded by their revengeful feelings towards the conquered peasants, they forgot to guard against the revenge of a fettered King. Dissimulation had been the result of the mortifications to which Richard had been subjected, and he played his game wonderfully well. Once, indeed, he was premature in his action, and the confederated Lords triumphed, and displayed their triumph, it would appear, in a rather unseemly and most injudicious manner. A second time, however, Richard gained his independence by a mere exertion of his personal will. After waiting for a twelvemonth, in a great Council held after Easter, 1389, he unexpectedly requested his uncle Gloucester to tell him his age. 'Your Highness,' the Duke replied, 'is in your twenty-second year.' 'Then,' said the King, 'I must certainly be old enough to manage my own

concerns. I have been longer under the control of tutors than any ward in my dominions. I thank you, my lords, for your past services, but do not require them any longer.' He then demanded the seals from the Archbishop of York, and the keys of the Exchequer from the Bishop of Hereford, while the Council was dismissed. The Revolution was complete, and thenceforward Richard was King in fact as well as in name. The course he adopted was eminently characteristic. He did not begin by avenging himself on his late tutors, nor did he seek to inaugurate his new-born independence by any display of excessive extravagance or arbitrary notions. He had exhibited his real views, indeed, on the last point pretty clearly during his first abortive attempt at emancipation, by the unconstitutional opinions he extorted from the judges. But he was now studiously moderate and conciliatory. Seemingly satisfied with the possession of real power, he showed no present disposition to abuse it. It is acknowledged by all parties that his government for several years was nearly unexceptionable. Could the past have been obliterated from his memory, and had not the degeneration of his disposition during these early years been of too permanent a character, his reign might have had a very different termination. But he could not forget, and he would not forgive, the indignities to which he had been subjected, and the death or banishment and degradation of his favourites. His hatred was as deep-rooted as his

patience and dissimulation were perfect. Little by little, as he gradually felt his way to his purpose, the old symptoms of evil reappeared, and the relations of the King and those against whom he was secretly plotting became more unfriendly. Buying off some and intimidating others into ignominious subserviency, he broke up the old party which had so long, beneficially in one respect, but in another unwisely and unnecessarily shackled him, and then he executed his long-deferred vengeance with a fierceness and unrelenting energy equal to the long delay. He had forgiven nothing, and finding the nation willing to stand by a stunned and passive spectator, he set no limits either to his vengeance or to his arbitrary exercise of power. The fiercer part of his character had now the entire ascendant; with his long self-restraint disappeared apparently his former judgment. He ceased to think of and provide against the future—he lived only in the present. He was no longer the mere elegant patron of literature, the appreciator of Chaucer and Gower, the handsome and accomplished master and companion of a De Vere and a De la Pole,—he was the blind despot, insulting every national feeling, rousing every personal resentment, and destroying every substantial support to his throne. The reaction from tutelage had been too great, the suspense of the long-coveted revenge had been too long for not merely his moderation, but his common sense. His mind seems

to have given way under the trial and the consummation. His energy degenerated into mere violence; injustice at first indulged in through revenge became habitual with him; favouritism and misgovernment, once scarcely more than symbols of self-assertion, became his settled policy; and at last the man who in former years had seemed to handle Henry of Bolingbroke as a mere instrument of his designs, lost at the critical moment all presence of mind and all decision, and became a panic-stricken and helpless prisoner in his cousin's hands—lending himself with a now hopelessly ignominious humility to the ceremonial of his own deposition and the elevation of the triumphant House of Lancaster.

HENRY THE FOURTH.

The accession of the House of Lancaster to the Throne of England ushers in a new epoch in the history of that country, to which the reign of Richard the Second forms a sort of introduction. Out of the chaos of personal ambitions and class aspirations and prejudices which constituted the main features of the latter reign was gradually evolved during the fifteenth century that type of society which was to be subjected to the great Religious and Political experiments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Everybody must feel that while there is considerable similarity between some of the great questions which interested and agitated the public mind during the latter part of the reign of Edward the Third, and that of Richard the Second, and those with which the Tudor period was mainly occupied, there is also an essential difference in the character of the society to which these questions were addressed. The period on which we are now entering ought to supply the history of this transition, and explain the recurrence of the same

problems under such very different conditions of solution; but unhappily there is no period of our national history of which we know so little from authentic and reliable sources of information, and which has called forth so little discriminating industry on the part of competent students. The obscurity and uncertainty which attach to the events, naturally also affect to a corresponding extent our knowledge of the characters of the sovereigns who occupied the throne during that period, and I may therefore at once say that the Estimates of them which I venture to put forth are given with greater reserve and hesitation than any preceding ones, and must be received only as the best that I am able to form under very disadvantageous circumstances.

The Fifteenth Century, while it was really the workshop in which the great revolutions of the succeeding centuries were gradually being prepared, was in itself to the outward eye only a confused collection of imperfect and abortive essays of workmanship—the first attempts to realise the great ideas to which the preceding century had given birth. Full of interest so far as concerns the subject-matter of the day, it is also full of seemingly wasted efforts, and purposes distracted or postponed at the very moment of their proximate fulfilment. And as with the Age, so with the Leaders of the Age. There are plenty of men of ability, but there are few really great careers, if greatness is to be estimated

by permanently great achievements. Nor do the Kings escape from this common imputation of fruitlessness. The ablest and greatest seem to have palpably mistaken their appropriate career, or to have wilfully stopped short in it,—the one really feeble sovereign among them is the only complete character, and his completeness fitted him only for an entirely different position.

Henry of Bolingbroke, as he was called, from the place of his birth, had very little in common with his predecessor except in the power of concealing his thoughts, and the patience to await opportunities. But what in Richard was a constrained and unnatural state of mind, which eventually destroyed the balance of his understanding altogether, seems to have been in Henry the natural growth of his temperament. Of all his predecessors he most resembled in several points of character the founder of the Plantagenet dynasty. He might, perhaps, be called a reproduction of Henry the Second, without the intensity of subdued passion which marked that King, but without also the elevation and breadth of mind which (after all his faults) recommend his namesake to our sympathy. Both kings acted always on deliberate and preconceived plans; neither of them seems to have had great originality of mind, yet each studied deeply mankind and events, and each in his degree profited by his study largely. Both were studious, and both were fond of consider-

ing and discussing questions of casuistry, as a relaxation from and a school for their more immediately practical duties. A well-informed writer, who was born five years before the accession of Henry the Fourth, declares respecting that king:—'I have known in my time that men of great literary attainments, who used to enjoy intercourse with him, have said that he was a man of very great ability, and of so tenacious a memory that he used to spend great part of the day in solving and unravelling hard questions. . . . Let it suffice for future ages to know that this man was a studious investigator of all doubtful points of morals, and that, as far as his hours of rest from the administration of his government permitted him to be free, he was always eager in the prosecution of such pursuits.' He is said to have invited to England a celebrated French lady and memoir-writer, Christine de Pisan, and the careful education which he gave to Prince James of Scotland was of so superior a kind for the age, that the greatest benefit was conferred on Scotland when the long-detained prince was at last allowed to return to that country. Henry himself is said to have jestingly remarked when the young prince first fell into his hands, on his voyage to France, that the Scots might have paid him the compliment of considering him as quite as well fitted to educate the boy as the French. These tastes and pursuits are only such as we might have expected from the son of John of

Gaunt. But Henry also resembled his ancestor, the first Plantagenet king, in another respect, namely, in his great activity of body as well as of mind. He was no mere closet student or statesman of the cabinet. His whole life, until he was disabled by disease, was filled with a succession of personal enterprises, in which the physical exertion must have been as great as the individual courage was conspicuous. It must be remembered that his reign comprises only a very small portion of his life, and that he came to the throne at the age of thirty-three, a veteran in body as well as in mind. After the assumption of the reins of government by Richard, he thought it expedient to quit the political scene for a time, and in September, 1390, he went into Prussia, and joined the forces that were attacking the Pagan King of Lithuania, and distinguished himself in the battles in that country. He returned to England about April the 25th following; but on July the 25th, 1392, he made a second expedition to Prussia with 300 men, and not meeting with so friendly a reception from the lords of that country as he expected, he went to Venice, and thence proceeded to Jerusalem, where he visited the Holy Places as a pilgrim, and ransomed many Christian captives. In the course of his travels he visited Italy, Austria, Bohemia, and France, and was again in England in 1397. His bold enterprise in landing at Ravenspurn in 1399, and his personal attendance, after his acces-

sion, in the campaigns against the Percies, the Scots, and the Welsh, all attest a physical activity and energy quite equal to if not beyond that of his mind. He was personally brave to the extent of rashness, and what we have already said shows that he had a considerable amount of enterprise, and of religious faith, if not of enthusiasm. He never lost his presence of mind, and he seldom lost his temper. He preserved calmness and coolness in the midst of great crises, and never took an active part except where he could do so with effect. But he was as prompt in action as cautious in acting. He was not unkindly in his disposition, in the earlier part of his life, at any rate, and he was sufficiently versed in the more ornamental accomplishments of the day to hold his ground with any knight or courtier, while he had tact enough to catch the humours of the lower orders. He was a thoroughly capable man, and a not ill-meaning man. But his character seems, as far as we can judge, to have been at the bottom cold and unsympathetic, and as devoid of generous impulses as it was naturally free from sinister motives. Quiet, and probably unconscious selfishness seems to have been his ruling characteristic, and the circumstances of his position and life intensified this selfishness and made it something more than a passive quality. From taking good care not to injure or sacrifice himself, he went on to injure and sacrifice others. His wariness became suspicion, and his

caution degenerated into dissimulation. He stood in the invidious and dangerous position of the representative of a cadet branch of the reigning family. Not only was his father the uncle of the King, but he himself through his mother represented the collateral house of Lancaster, which from its origin in the reign of Henry the Third had been always a sort of centre of popular feeling, and an object of suspicion to the Crown. He was brought up among men with whom their own aggrandisement was the sole object, and with whom frequently the best path to safety and position seemed to be the destruction of all possible rivals. He thus learnt early the lesson of distrust of all men, and dissimulation with all, if not also of occasional treachery. 'I speak with some reserve on this last point, because my materials for judging are not sufficient or satisfactory for a positive decision. Much of Henry's conduct during the reign of Richard can be explained without attributing to him more than great reserve and a keen instinct of self-preservation. He took the field boldly against the obnoxious favourite De Vere, and acted for some time with the Duke of Gloucester, being one of the Lords Appellant forced on Richard. But he carefully abstained from any personal disrespect to the King, and he openly (though vainly) interposed to stop the execution of Sir Simon Burley, a courtier of the last reign, who, whatever his demerits, has the recommendation of having been selected by the Black

Prince as guardian to his son. A breach, thereupon, ensued between Henry and his uncle Gloucester, and he seems to have withdrawn from the counsels of the party. The King, at any rate, always expressed friendly feelings towards him, and made from that time a marked difference in his manner of speaking of him and Mowbray from that he employed respecting the rest of the Lords Appellant. Fresh manifestations of favour were displayed towards him when Richard assumed his authority in 1389. But Henry seems to have either somewhat mistrusted this appearance of favour, or to have felt his position too difficult a one, and, as we have seen, quitted England for the next few years. In 1397, however, we find the King declaring that he acted with his consent in arresting the Duke of Gloucester. How far he was compelled to temporise during the succeeding period of undisguised tyranny, we do not know; he seems to have made no open opposition, at any rate; but there can be little doubt that he, as well as Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, began to tremble lest their own turn was coming, and to believe that Richard had never forgiven their former action against the favourites. It was under these circumstances that, as Henry said, Mowbray opened his mind to him, and suggested measures of mutual protection, and that Henry disclosed the alleged communication, at the order of the King, in Parliament. How far this was mere self-preservation and

how far treachery on Henry's part I am unable to say. His character does not forbid, while it does not invite, the worse interpretation. He may have desired to remove a rival in Mowbray, or he may have only acted on his principle of general distrust and self-regard, and have considered it necessary for his own safety to denounce his old colleague to the King. The sequel is well known. Richard, after pretending to encourage a decision of the truth or falsehood of the accusation by trial by combat, seized the opportunity of banishing both peers from England,—Henry at first only for ten years, afterwards, it would seem, for life—on the plea that a decision either way would be injurious to himself from the connection of both with the Royal blood, and that it would be dangerous to the peace of England for the would-be duellists to continue there in deadly hostility to each other. Other offences were added to justify Norfolk's (at first) heavier sentence, but the real offence in both was carefully kept out of view. Next followed the death of John of Gaunt and the iniquitous confiscation of his property, and then came the expedition of Henry, nominally to assert his own rights and rescue the country from the evil advisers of the Crown—really, undoubtedly, to make a stroke (if feasible) for the Crown. His lessons in casuistry may have led him to distinguish between absolute and possible intentions, and so justified to his conscience his disavowal of all designs on the

Crown when he first landed; but he as well as the Percies must have known that there was really no alternative, in dealing with such a man as Richard, between his destruction and their own. It is probable that the Percies, like Henry, made their policy wait on the course of events, and though bent on deposing the King, would have much preferred a puppet King in a Mortimer, to a clever ruler such as they knew Henry of Bolingbroke would prove. But Henry's management and popularity combined proved too much for them, and they acquiesced, seemingly with good-will, in his accession.

I have given some idea of what Henry of Bolingbroke may have been in himself and as a cadet of the royal family: we have now to consider his character as affected and developed by his elevation to the throne. He had hitherto suffered (though from a different cause) from the same isolation and want of sympathy with others to which the position of Kings exposes them. He was now to suffer in character and feeling from the want of the recognised position of a legitimate and undisputed succession. Unlike Henry the Second, whose succession to the throne had been a kind of Restoration, and who thus added to personal qualifications the prestige of accepted authority, Henry the Fourth was the nominee King of the Parliament, and his primary object must be to maintain himself on this Parliamentary throne, and to secure the succession to his children. Thus he never could

achieve the independent position of kingship. Every act of his beyond the walls of Parliament seemed like a mere exhibition of personal will, and every concession of his within the walls of Parliament seemed only a natural and inevitable consequence of the origin of his power. His mind, though strong, was not sufficiently commanding to master and impress with awe, though it might sway and manage his Lords and Commons. There was nothing striking in his presence, though there was nothing insignificant or mean. In person he was of the middle height, but well-proportioned and compact. His address was not undignified, and could be when he chose very pleasing, but he had to court Parliamentary favour too closely to be able to maintain altogether the dignity of a King. The Commons addressed him in language which will startle the student who has gained his ideas of deference to the Sovereign from the days of the Tudors, and he was compelled generally to answer in a fashion which sounds somewhat humiliating, even where we are bound to acknowledge its wisdom and its justice. There was not sufficient natural elevation in his character to support entirely this deference to popular demands which seemed, in his case, rather humiliating than graceful and condescending. He had not the elements of Royal stateliness in his nature, and his popular manners had outlived their proper sphere of action—the candidateship for the

Crown, not its possession. Still, he might have inspired regard as well as respect, if it had not been for other circumstances. Though his policy at home and abroad was necessarily, to a great degree hampered and disarranged by personal and family considerations—though he had to struggle for a throne where he ought to have been governing a united people and directing a national statesmanship, he achieved by the force and persistence of his character, and his unwearied industry and activity, much more than could have been expected from his position. At home he crushed every conspiracy, and though he lived in perpetual hazard from attempts on his life, he was not driven thereby into passion or cruelty. Warfare under his auspices assumed a much more humane and civilised character. The Royal banner, wherever it was raised in the Scotch wars, was a secure shelter from the worst accompaniments of war, and in France his captains gave a noble lesson in humanity to a Duke of Burgundy. The death of Richard is a *possible*, but only a *possible* blot on his memory. How and exactly when that prince died no one can say, but the suspicions against Henry, though strong, are far from amounting to proofs. As of former charges against him, we may say of this,—it is not incompatible with his character, but it is not the natural deduction from it. He was for the first six or seven years of his reign, at any rate, a just, if not perhaps a very popular

ruler, and though his administration and his popularity after that time underwent a serious change for the worse, this was owing rather to the effects of mental and bodily decay than to any other cause. Of his foreign policy throughout, a late editor of his correspondence speaks in terms of high praise. 'It is impossible,' he says, 'to read and study this lengthy and almost unbroken series of letters without coming to the conclusion that [in the transactions with France and Flanders] the English were by far the least to blame, and were evidently actuated by a sincere desire to make peace on equitable terms; a desire for which very little credit can be given to the other side. . . . . The whole correspondence taken together and considered in all its details exhibits a new and striking illustration of one of those numerous perils and disturbances which rendered uneasy indeed the early years of the reign of the first monarch of the House of Lancaster; affording yet another proof of the vigour of the mind of the man who could pass safely through so many troubles, and at last obtain success; and certainly not exhibiting his character in an unfavourable light beside that of neighbouring princes of his day.' But with all this cleverness of administration at home and abroad, Henry of Bolingbroke was out of unison with his times in one essential point.

I have spoken of the Lollard movement in its earlier social and political aspects. It had been

originally, it is well known, favoured and protected by John of Gaunt, and there is reason to believe that his son had shared in these sympathies. But the levelling or democratic tendencies which were thought to be the fruit of Lollardism, and which culminated in Wat Tyler's rising, frightened not only the middle-classes and nobles, but the House of Lancaster into orthodoxy and sympathy with the Church. The nobles and middle-classes had by the commencement of the reign of Henry the Fourth considerably recovered from their panic. They proved, indeed, still *doctrinally* orthodox enough to pass the statute *De Hæretico Comburendo*, which ushered in an era of intolerance to the death among fellow-Christians in England; but they were not loth to copy a page out of the creed of the Lollards, and to propose to the King a sweeping ecclesiastical reform, which would have reduced the clergy to a condition of primitive Christian poverty, and enriched the King and all other classes, and provided funds for the charity of the kingdom, at their expense. But the House of Lancaster had *not* moved in this respect with the nation which had called it to the throne. Henry had found the advantage of an alliance with the Church in his struggle with Richard, who had most unwisely alienated its affections by his tyranny, and he therefore entertained an overweening estimate of the strength and importance of the Church. The old superstitious feelings of a Plantagenet (which

had peeped forth in his pilgrimage to Jerusalem) may have intensified this feeling, and after his accession he lent himself to the aggrandisement of the Church, without due regard for the interests of the State or the wishes of the people. On this point he was disposed to be obstinate, and to show self-assertion in his dealings with Parliament, and, indeed, there can be little doubt that the Church was saved by his exertions and resistance from a timely reformation, if not from a complete spoliation. On this point Henry was a bigot, and a persecuting bigot, and, as he urged persecution, the Parliament and the people became more tolerant towards the Lollards, and more sympathetic with their teachings. Instead, then, of becoming the leader and moderator of what might have been made a great and wise movement, Henry expended his energies in checking and repressing it, and while he destroyed his own popularity, and undermined the position of his family, ensured the more thorough downfall of the Church in the succeeding century. The mind which was equal to the lessons of casuistry was not wide enough to grasp the bearings of a great and vital question,—the faculties which were sufficient to constitute an able administrator, fell short of the dimensions of genius and of the higher statesmanship.

The personal reign of Henry the Fourth may be said, in one sense, to terminate with the latter part of the year 1406. From that time he laboured with

yoke-fellows very similar in origin and authority to those which had been imposed on Richard, though the semblance of his personal co-operation was kept up with more outward decency. A painful disease in the face, which had more or less afflicted him from a child of six years old, seems to have rapidly increased, and to have become a sort of leprosy; and now to this was added a succession of epileptic fits, which at last brought him to the grave. Under the influence of these complaints, his mind became seriously weakened, his household expenditure became so reckless, and his general power of administration so obviously broke down, that the Parliament and the Privy Council took decided steps, and after first curbing his extravagance and the misconduct to which his weakness had given rise by rigorous surveillance, at last took the reins of government out of his hands, in all but the name, and placed his eldest son at the head of the Government. Once the King asserted his authority by dismissing his son from the Council, but the act was the last effort on the part of the once all-efficient Bolingbroke, and the Crown which, as the story goes, Prince Henry took prematurely from his father's bedside, had really for several years practically rested on his own head.

Henry the Fourth was not a good man or a great man, but he possessed qualities which frequently suggest, though they do not realise, both one and the other character. His aims in life cannot be considered

either entirely praiseworthy or entirely malign. His virtues were nearly as moderate as his vices. His intellect, like his morality, had the type of mediocrity; but the mediocrity in the former case was certainly of a higher type than in the latter. His virtue was too passive to endure the ordeal of an active career, but his intellect was strong enough to secure him a creditable place in the gallery of Kings. We may say of him as the old gardener says of Rob Roy in Scott's novel of that name,—'There are mony things ower bad for blessing and ower gude for banning, like,'—Henry of Bolingbroke.

HENRY THE FIFTH.

THE historical fate of Henry of Monmouth has been a strange one. He has long been the darling of popular fame, first as the actual hero of the battle of Agincourt, and next as the supposed hero of a number of juvenile escapades, which met with a portion of their deserts in the Justice and the lock-up; and it is difficult to say in which capacity he is the more attractive to the popular mind. I always feel some hesitation in arriving at historical conclusions opposed to traditional judgments, but I am afraid that the reputation of Henry, if it is to be supported at all, must rest on other grounds than these:—that the glories of his French campaigns, when looked at with an impartial eye, will appear as little else than the ephemeral, though brilliant, success of a mistaken and disastrous policy, and that the youthful delinquencies which, through the artistic genius of a great dramatist, have exercised such a charm over the fancy, if they have any foundation at all in fact, formed so insignificant a feature in the early life of Henry as to be thoroughly misleading, if taken as an

index of his conduct before he became King of England. The only facts of his early career about which we can feel at all certain present a character so unlike the popular conception, that it seems very difficult to admit the possibility of there being any truth in those stories, familiar to us all, of the Prince and his companions; and if the authority of contemporary chroniclers induces me to give any ear to them at all, I am compelled to receive them in a very partial and modified sense. I cannot expect, however, that my readers will, in this case, give credence to my simple assertion, and a more detailed account of the facts is therefore as necessary on this account, as it is essential to an understanding of what Prince Henry really was.

To begin with, Harry of Monmouth—as he was called, from the place of his birth—was not born in the purple. When Richard the Second was displaced by Bolingbroke, Henry was twelve years of age, and for these twelve years he was merely the heir of a collateral branch of the royal family, which did not stand in the immediate order of succession, even supposing the reigning King should die childless, and whose pretensions to the succession were not likely to receive any favour at the hands of the King, nor could hope much from popular support as long as the Duke of Gloucester remained alive. He was therefore from the beginning placed in a position both secondary and unpromising. It became also a

very invidious and difficult position, when his father landed in England to subvert the existing government. Young Harry was then in Ireland, whither he had been carried by King Richard (along with young Humphrey of Gloucester) as a measure of precaution, becoming thus a sort of hostage for the good behaviour of his father. Richard had always treated him with great kindness, his preference for the young probably animating his better feelings in this matter. Henry (who is said to have always retained a grateful feeling towards the King) was knighted by him in Ireland, and under his auspices first witnessed actual warfare. Even when the news of Bolingbroke's enterprise reached the King, Richard accepted with seeming faith the lad's protestations of his own innocence, and took no other measure against him than that of leaving him behind him in Ireland, under a gentle restraint. The position of Henry, under these circumstances, must have called for the early exercise of considerable tact and self-restraint, if he possessed those qualities, as Richard's lenient course towards him seems to imply; and at any rate, his mind must have been roused to the consideration of a grave moral difficulty as to the comparative claims of filial duty and personal gratitude, and so may have been schooled at an early age to habits of reflection and decision. Then came a great change, and he became all at once the heir-apparent to an established though still precarious Royalty. But along with the seduc-

tive splendour and flatteries of this prominent position, which might have lulled his energies into slothful repose, he entered on cares and responsibilities of no ordinary kind. From a lad he was called on to co-operate by his presence first and then by his personal exertions in the maintenance of the newly-acquired dignity, and he seems to have responded to this call with alacrity and unwearying industry. We can trace his career almost continuously from this point in State correspondence, in the records of the Privy Council, and in the Rolls of Parliament. A few extracts will suffice. Henry Percy (Hotspur), from whom the Prince had been learning the art of war on the Welsh Borders, tells the Council how the Commons of the country of North Wales, that is, the counties of Carnarvon and Merioneth, who have been before him, have humbly offered their thanks to my Lord the Prince for the great exertions of his kindness and goodwill in procuring their pardon at the hands of the King. The pardon itself, dated March 10, 1401, when Henry of Monmouth was only fourteen, states that it was granted 'of our especial grace, and at the prayer of our dearest first-born son, Henry, Prince of Wales.' In March, 1403, the young Prince was appointed by his father, with the consent of the Privy Council, Lieutenant of Wales, with full powers of inquiring into offences, of pardoning offenders, of arraying the King's lieges, and of doing all other things which he should find necessary. From a letter

to the Privy Council from the Prince himself about this time, pointing out the necessity of supplies of money, we learn that he had been compelled to pawn his own plate and jewels to raise money for the expenses of the war. On July the 10th, in the same year, the King tells the Council that he had received letters from his son, and information from his messengers, acquainting him with the gallant and good bearing of his very dear and well-beloved son, which gave him very great pleasure. He then commissions them to pay 1,000*l.* to the Prince for the purpose of enabling him to keep his soldiers together. Close on this date came the insurrection of the Percies. His son joined the King from Wales, and was present at the battle of Shrewsbury, July the 21st, 1403, where he was wounded in the face by an arrow.[1]

Henry returned after the battle to his Welsh lieutenancy, and we meet with a series of letters from him to the King and Privy Council, entering fully on the matters attending the campaigns against Owen Glendower, and on June the 7th, 1406, we find an entry in the Rolls of Parliament which may be taken as a specimen of the estimation in which the Prince was held by the House of Commons. The Speaker, in his opening address, made 'a commendation of the many excellences and virtues which habitually dwelt in the honourable person of the

[1] According to a contemporary chronicler, he refused to quit the field, saying, 'If the Prince flies, who will stay to end the battle?'

Prince; and especially, first, of the humility and obedience which he bears toward our sovereign lord the King, his father, so that there can be no person of any degree whatever who entertains or shows more honour and reverence of humbleness and obedience to his father than he shows in his honourable person; secondly, how God hath granted to him and endowed him with good heart and courage, as much as ever was needed in any such prince in the world. And, thirdly [he spoke], of the great virtue which God hath granted him in an especial manner, that howsoever much he had set his mind upon any important undertaking to the best of his own judgment, yet for the great confidence which he placed in his council, and in their loyalty, judgment, and discretion, he would kindly and graciously be influenced by and conform himself to his council and their ordinance, according to what seemed best to them, setting aside entirely his own will and pleasure; from which it is probable that, by the grace of God, very great comfort and honour and advantage will flow hereafter. For this, the said Commons humbly thank our Lord Jesus Christ, and they pray for its good continuance.' This is the first of four successive Parliaments in which Prince Henry was cordially thanked for his services, and recommended to the King's favour. He was now gradually assuming a more and more important position in the State. On December the 8th, 1406, we find him present at a council at Westminster,

which had met to deliberate on the governance of the King's household, the extravagance and mismanagement of which had been alluded to in a gentle manner by the Commons on the day when they had used such warm expressions of praise respecting the Prince. So that while we are looking for traces of the Prince's extravagance, we come instead on complaints of that of the King! It appears from an official entry, that on May the 4th, 1407, the Prince was retained by the consent of the Council to remain in attendance on the person of the King, and at his bidding—an additional proof of the growing disability of the King and rising influence of young Henry. A generous proceeding on his part, on December the 2nd, 1407, must not be omitted. On that day, after receiving a vote of thanks and confidence from the Commons, 'the said Lord the Prince, most humbly kneeling, declared to our said Lord the King, and to all the Estates of Parliament, in respect of the Duke of York, how that he had understood that divers obloquies and detractions had been put forth by certain evil-disposed persons, to the slander and derogation of the honourable estate and name of the said Duke. Wherein the Lord the Prince made declaration for the said Duke, that if it had not been for his skill and good advice, himself the said Prince and those that were with him, would have been in very great perils and desolation. And he further added, in behalf of the said Duke, that if he had been one of

the poorest gentlemen of the realm, wishing to earn a good name and honour by service, the said Duke did so in his own person, labour and use his endeavours to give comfort and courage to all others who were of the said company; and that in all his actions he is a true and valiant knight.' Edward, Duke of York, whom Henry thus generously vindicated, was the 'Aumerle' (*i.e.* Albemarle) of Shakespeare, an old favourite of Richard's, and had been engaged rather discreditably in plots against Henry the Fourth in the early part of the reign. Prince Henry, however, continued to have confidence in him after his own accession to the Crown; for in the second year of his reign he made a declaration in Parliament in his favour, in order to remove the attainder which had been passed against him by Henry the Fourth, and trusted him even after the treason of the Duke's brother Richard, Earl of Cambridge. The Duke fell fighting by his side in the battle of Agincourt.

From this period Henry was either occupied with Welsh affairs (military and civil) or present at Councils in London, and we see him a prominent member of the Privy Council, of which we find him acting as President in July, 1408. On February the 1st, 1409, the custody of the Earl of March and his brother was given to him; early in the same year he was appointed Warden of the Cinque Ports and Constable of Dover for life, with a salary of 300*l.* a year, and on March the 18th, 1410, Captain of Calais. In the

Parliament of the year 1410 we find a petition of the Commons reciting that a statute of that year, to prevent malicious prosecutions and secret indictments, was made by the King's grace, *par la bone mediation de leur redouté Seigneur le Prince.* During the June and July of this year we find the Prince constantly acting as President of the Privy Council, and as such actively engaged in all the leading affairs of the State; and this is the more remarkable, as it is to June the 23rd that is assigned by Stowe a riot in Eastcheap (mentioned also in the 'Chronicle of London'), in which, however, not the Prince, but the Lords Thomas and John, his brothers, are said to have been concerned, and which was put down by the Mayor and Sheriffs. The King is stated by Stowe to have been very angry at the conduct of the citizens, but to have been appeased on their explanations to 'William Gascoigne, Chief Justice.' The only thing to connect Prince Henry with this transaction is the fact that the King had made him on March the 18th preceding a grant of the mansion of Coldharbour, near Eastcheap; while to make the matter more contradictory still, it is stated by the writers who attribute excesses to Prince Henry, that in consequence of these he was displaced in his seat at the Council by his brother Thomas, one of the rioters on this occasion! In November, 1411, another Parliament assembled, and it appears from an entry in the Rolls, that the King had taken in ill-part some of the pro-

ceedings of the Commons, but on their prayer declared them to be his loyal and faithful subjects. It is clear that the jealousy of the King at the transference of the powers of Government from his own hands to those of the Prince and Council was rapidly increasing. Prince Henry's house appears to have become the resort of a large part of the nobility and great men, despatches from foreign governments were addressed to him, and his name was associated with that of the King in public acts. An application had been made to the Prince (in his capacity of *alter ego* to the King) that very year by the Duke of Burgundy for aid against the Orleanist party in France, and a force was dispatched under the command of the Earl of Arundel, Sir John Oldcastle (Lord Cobham in right of his wife), and other friends of the Prince. There had been a treaty of marriage for the Prince with the house of Burgundy, and Henry appears to have always had a strong appreciation of the importance to England of the Burgundian alliance. The expedition culminated in the victory of St. Cloud (in November), after which Arundel and Cobham showed their humanity by drawing themselves up in battle array to protect their prisoners from the vengeance of the Duke of Burgundy. Between this time and the spring of the following year, a change seems to have taken place in the counsels of the English King. In May 1412, a treaty was contracted with the Orleanist party,

and on August the 25th the Lord Thomas, who had been created Duke of Clarence on July the 9th, was sent to France with a force to co-operate against Burgundy. As far as we can ascertain, a party hostile to the Prince (according to one account, aided by his stepmother) had persuaded the King, who was terribly weakened in mind and body by his epileptic fits, that his eldest son was seeking to dethrone him, and had induced him to assert his authority by changing sides in the French civil wars. Prince Henry appears to have been accused during this year of appropriating to his own use money given him for the payment of the garrison of Calais. In the minutes of the Privy Council between July and September (1412) this slander is referred to, and stated to be disproved by two rolls of paper which the Prince had sent to the Council; and letters were ordered to be written under the Privy Seal vindicating the Prince's conduct. The real fact was, that at this time there was due to the Prince for Calais a very large sum of money. Whatever may have been the exact occasion of the quarrel between father and son, it appears from the Records that on February the 18th, 1412 (while the negotiations with the Orleanist party were going on), Prince Henry had ceased to be of the Privy Council, between 600*l.* and 700*l.* being then paid to him for his labours and costs while he was a councillor. Probably the displeasure of the King with his Parliament in the preceding December marks the beginning of this

family estrangement. The 'Chronicle of London' tells us that, 'on the last day of June, the Prince came to London with much people and gentles, and remained in the Bishop of Durham's house till July the 11th; and the King, who was then at St. John's House, removed to the Bishop of London's palace, and thence to his house at Rotherhithe.' And, again, under September the 23rd, it records that 'Prince Henry came to the Council with a huge people.' Everything seems to indicate that there had been a great political crisis, in which the King had resumed the reins of government, and the Prince had been supported against him by the people, high and low.

On March the 20th following Henry the Fourth died, and the Prince, who had so long governed in his name, became actual King of England. Of the general tone of his life and character as Prince the records I have quoted seem to leave no doubt. It only remains to say that some of the statements imputing to him a wild and reckless life during that period are found in the writings of contemporaries, composed very soon after the alleged events. The only way of escaping from the difficulty, is by supposing that these statements represent the slanders spread abroad by the party which, in the last year of the King's reign, succeeded in removing him from the Privy Council. They may have been founded on some unguarded actions of Prince Henry—they certainly can only be received as distortions, more or

less, of the real facts. It is possible that the whole originated in the fact of Prince Henry's early friendship with Sir John Oldcastle, who became hateful to the clergy (the chroniclers of the day) on account of his Lollardism, and whose character has suffered from calumny still more grossly in connection with those very excesses imputed to the Prince. If the gallant, religious Oldcastle—the Havelock of his day—could be transformed into the prototype of Falstaff, we need wonder at no perversions of historical facts.

The character of Henry, as it presents itself to us in the foregoing records, is that of a man of resolute nature, self-reliant, and prompt of decision, but not presumptuous or precipitate; marked by strong good sense, and yet a generous and compassionate spirit, and also tinged far more than is usual at such an early age with a strong feeling of religious duty and moral responsibility. His reference in his letters of all his achievements and trials to the superintending will of God is too habitual, and made in too earnest and natural a manner, for us to regard it as mere decent verbiage. His character seems to have already possessed sufficient force to make a deep impression on the leading men of the day, and on the constituted authorities of the realm, and to have inspired the one with respect, the other with implicit confidence. Nor does his conduct after his accession to the throne alter this estimate in any material

point. In one case, indeed, his kindly feeling and attachment to his associates in war and peace gave way before the stronger influence of religious fanaticism. Although he had been so much the companion of the Lollard Oldcastle, Henry appears to have always entertained a strong dislike to the Lollards. The tone of his mind in this respect harmonised with that of his father, and his love of administration and his military sense of order and authority were both probably outraged by the opinions attributed to these semi-religious, semi-social reformers. He had joined the Peers in a petition against them as early as December, 1406, and when he became King, he seems to have allowed himself, under the influence of the higher clergy, to believe anything almost against them as heretics and rebels. He tried his personal influence with Oldcastle, and his powers of argument, before abandoning him to his enemies, but after this I cannot find that he displayed any deep sympathy in his fate. There was a hardness of character induced on occasions by his religious zeal, which was also engendered on other occasions by his military *esprit de corps*. He certainly pushed the severities then licensed in warfare to a very questionable extent. Yet in the face of the strong testimony borne by French writers to his just and impartial government of France, and the protection he accorded to the middle and lower classes in that country against their feudal oppres-

sors, I cannot call him harsh or cruel in his general disposition. At home he was almost worshipped by the people, and while the nobles were fascinated by his knightly qualities, and the clergy by his piety and devotion to the interests of the Church, the Commons in Parliament seemed willing to incur any expense and grant any supplies that he declared to be necessary for the support of the honour of the country. He had little time for home administration after his accession to the throne, and the great mistake of his life—his French wars—never operated so disastrously as in this respect. His government would probably have been just, on the whole, but firm and unbending to the verge, if not beyond it, of severity. He was capable, indeed, of great generosity, and of considerable acts of leniency. He released his rival, Mortimer, from his restraint; he restored the son of Henry Percy to his ancestral honours. There was little suspicion or jealousy in his nature. He was frank and fearless, because he felt so self-reliant and so capable. He was self-reliant also, because he had a strong religious faith, and believed himself only an instrument in the hands of Providence. From the same source came his defects. He was severe, and a persecutor from a strong sense of duty, which overcame all other considerations. He had strong sympathies, but he was more than their master—he was sometimes their unconscious tyrant. That he believed it his duty,

as inheriting the throne of Edward the Third, to engage in the French war, is evident from the manner in which the clergy, for their own purposes, played on his mind in this direction. His love of enterprise, engendered by a life spent in almost incessant campaigns, was no doubt greatly inflamed by his abhorrence of the anarchy into which France seemed falling, and which appeared to summon him to her rescue, and there is evidence that he considered himself called on by God to punish the sins of the French people.

The picture of his personal appearance, drawn by a contemporary who was probably attached to the royal household in the capacity of chaplain, and who, at any rate, seems to have had great opportunities of close personal observation of Henry, appears to accord with this character. The form of his head is said to have been spherical, his forehead remarkably full, the symbol, as the writer observes, of a powerful mind. His hair was brown, thick, and smooth, and his nose straight; his face oblong; his complexion was florid; his eyes were bright, large, and of a reddish tinge, dove-like when unmoved, but fierce as those of a lion when he was angered. His teeth were even and white as snow, his ears graceful and small, his chin cleft, his neck fair and of a becoming thickness throughout; his cheeks of a rosy hue in part, and in part of a delicate whiteness; his lips of

a vermilion tint, his limbs well formed, and the bones and sinews of his frame firmly knit together. His schoolmaster had been his uncle, the celebrated Cardinal Beaufort, one of the most astute men of the age, and we have evidence that he imbibed a taste for learning and literature, and a pleasure in the society of literary and learned men. While Prince of Wales, he requested the poet Lydgate to translate the 'Destruction of Troy,' because he wished the story to be known generally to high and low. Lydgate tells us that the Prince, to avoid the vice of sloth and idleness, employed himself in exercising his body in martial plays, according to the instructions of Vegetius. As Prince, also, he became a patron of the poet Oceleve, who addresses to him two of his poems. His great love of music and his proficiency in archery complete the record of his special tastes and accomplishments. The chaplain already quoted attributes to him a quiet and dignified sense of humour and a versatility of mood, which rather lend countenance to a modified reception of the stories of Prince Hal. His temper seems to have been generally bright and cheerful, but to have been subject to occasional fits of moodiness, the soldier and man of the world, perhaps, alternating in his mind with the brooding religious devotee.

Such was Henry of Monmouth, the third hero-king of the English people, and the noblest representative

of the House of Lancaster,—a Bayard, a Statesman, and a Fanatic,—the Roman Catholic Coligny, we might almost call him, of the fifteenth century,—yet above all, in everything that he said or did, a King and an Englishman.

HENRY THE SIXTH.

THE transition in one generation from one of the most energetic and successful of our Kings to one of the feeblest and most unfortunate—from one of the most self-reliant to one of the most dependent, and from a Hero-King to a Crowned Monk, is a fact worthy of some attention in any study of the descent and degeneration of character. Unlike as Henry of Monmouth and his son, Henry of Windsor, appear to be in their developed characters, and although the dissimilarity became such as to constitute almost a generic difference, there were some features in the character of both which exhibit a family likeness, and a difference of degree rather than of kind. Henry of Windsor was, indeed, an example of the effect of constitutional disease on family characteristics. There can be little doubt that he inherited from his grandfathers on both sides a diseased constitution. Henry the Fourth, as we have seen, was a sufferer from leprosy and epilepsy; Henry the Fifth is said by some writers not to have been entirely exempt from the former complaint; while Charles the Sixth

of France was for a considerable part of his life a decided maniac. It was from these debilitating sources that the constitution of the successor to the hero of Agincourt was derived; and it was under conditions and modifications imposed by these, that whatever there was in his qualities in common with his father was necessarily developed. There might be irritability and occasional violence with a character thus derived—there could scarcely have been strength or vigour. But, in fact, Henry the Sixth was not violent at any time, and his mind, when it became affected, tottered on the brink of idiotcy, and not of madness. It was rather a general weakening and stagnation of the bodily and mental frame than a derangement of either. In the fits of illness to which he became subject he lost both sense and memory, and the use of his limbs. When addressed by a deputation of the Peers he neither spoke nor moved, nor showed the smallest sign of intelligence. The deputation, in the zealous discharge of their duty, shook the unfortunate man, but they excited neither voice nor attention. They had him moved from one room to another, they pulled him about, but nothing could rouse him from his absolute lethargy. He could breathe and eat, but that was all. Such was the form which his disease assumed during its greatest though very transient intensity, and this was the general tendency of his constitution. At other times, and in the

usual course of his life, he was rational enough in the ordinary sense of the term, capable of considerable intellectual exertion in certain directions, and of a fair amount of intellectual apprehension. He inherited his father's love of books and learning and the learned, but the two men must have been students in a very different spirit. Henry of Monmouth read and listened on such subjects with the keen and active mind of a statesman and, perhaps, a casuist; his son read in a passive manner, as a recluse might read, and imbibed knowledge with the spirit of a pedagogue and a pious moralist. The tendency to direct others was really a common element in both father and son, but in the fifth Henry it displayed itself in administrative capacity —in the sixth Henry in moral admonitions and a mild moral supervision. But their practical success was very unequal in the two. The elder Henry, as we have seen, gained at an early age the confidence of all England, as he did, at a later period, of France, by his judicious government; for with considerable frankness of manner at least, and, on the whole, a fair average amount of actual sincerity and veracity, joined to a strong sense of duty, he was an experienced man of the world. The younger Henry, as a monk who knew him well tells us, was 'a man of pure simplicity of mind, without the least deceit or falsehood; he did nothing by trick, he always spoke truth, and performed every promise he made; he

never knowingly would do an injury to anyone. A bishop who had been his confessor for ten years, declared that he had heard nothing wrong confessed —only venial faults. He disliked the sports and business of the world—he thought them frivolous,' and in the simplicity of his heart felt impelled to reform that world of men and manners around him of the real character of which he knew actually nothing. This was his little enthusiasm—neither vehement nor ambitious. 'He was fond of exhorting his friends and visitors, and especially young men, to avoid vice, to pursue virtue, and to attach themselves to piety. He was fond of sending epistles of advice to many of his clergy, full of moral exhortations, to the astonishment of many.' When he saw some 'young gentlewomen' dancing in dresses which he considered immodest, he turned away to his room, exclaiming, 'Fie! fie! for shame! forsooth ye be to blame.' Sometimes his reforming tastes took a more practical and permanent form. It is well known that he was the founder of the great educational establishments of Eton and King's College, Cambridge, and from the proximity of his palace to the former place, he took much pleasure in looking after the schoolboys. 'When the scholars came to Windsor Castle on a visit to some of his attendants, he was fond of going to them, and giving to them moral exhortations to be steadily virtuous. He usually added a present of money,

with this short address, "Be good lads, meek and docile, and attend to your religion;" but he did not like to see them at Court, from his dread of seeing them contaminated by the dissolute example of his courtiers,' with whom, alas! it would appear the King was conscious he had not been very successful in his missionary efforts. 'He was very affectionate to his two half-brothers,' Edmund and Jasper Tudor —the former the father of Henry the Seventh— 'and had them carefully brought up under the most honest and virtuous ecclesiastics.' But when the lads came to stay with him in the palace, they must have had a rather constrained and dreary time of it, for Henry, with all the pains that the most over-anxious mother could take, exercised a strict surveillance over them, keeping watch from his own windows, lest anything improper should go on in their apartments.

This didactic spirit—which, however modified in form by the mild and gentle disposition of the King, must have been often fussy and foolish in its practical exercise—received its peculiar direction from the religious feelings of Henry, which gave the prevailing tone to his character. There had been a theological taste, if not a devotional tendency, in the House of Lancaster from John of Gaunt downward. The son of Edward the Third had been drawn by it to a patronage of the doctrines and person of Wickliffe; Henry of Bolingbroke had been led by it

to become the zealous friend and champion of the Roman Catholic clergy; while in Henry of Monmouth the same tone of mind had culminated in something of the spirit of an old Crusader against the Albigenses. The feebler and gentler type of his son's religious zeal was principally shown in the personal devoutness and mild asceticism of a saint or cloistered recluse. With an implicit faith in the Church, he left to its authorised ministers the uncongenial task of persecution, and was satisfied with being himself a sort of lay monk, and with trying to make all others like him, and the world itself one vast religious house for the performance of acts of piety and devotion. As might be supposed, from such a temperament and such an intellectual calibre, the formalities of religion had great weight with him, and possessed great interest for his mind. 'He loved,' says our monk-panegyrist, 'to read the Scriptures and the old chronicles. He was assiduous in prayer. His demeanour at church was peculiarly reverential; he would not sit indifferently down, or walk about during the service, as was then the fashion; but with an uncovered head, and bent knees, and his eyes constantly on his book, or with his hands raised to heaven, he performed earnestly his devotions, and meditated deeply within as the Scriptures were being read. He would not allow swords or spears to be brought into the church, nor contracts to be made nor conversations to be carried

on there. His Sundays were always consecrated to devotion, and to corresponding reading. His other days were passed in some public business, or in reading the Scriptures, or history, to which he was greatly attached.' In his practical life also, however, he showed that his religion was no mere formal act. 'He was very liberal to the poor; he never oppressed those subject to him with immoderate exactions, as other great men did; but he was fond of living among them, as a father among his children. His kindness of feeling was so great, that hearing one day that a person of his household had been robbed, he sent him twenty nobles, with an admonition to take more care of his property, but with a request not to prosecute the thief. Coming one day from St. Alban's to Cripplegate, he saw a quarter of a man impaled on a stake there for treason. He was greatly shocked, and exclaimed, "Take it away! I will not have any Christians so cruelly treated on my account." Having heard that four gentlemen of noble birth were about to suffer for treason to him, he sent his pardon with an earnest expedition to the place of their punishment.' He carried his patience and forgiveness to great lengths in matters that concerned himself. In his imprisonment we are told that a man struck him a violent blow on his neck with a weapon, meaning to have dashed out his brains or to have beheaded him. The King bore it patiently, and only exclaimed, 'Forsooth! forsooth! you do

foully to strike so a king anointed.' 'Forsooth,' and 'forsooth,' the monk tells us, were his only affirmatives, and he frequently rebuked his lords for their violent oaths. Another person, while he was in the Tower, stabbed him in the side, and then, thinking he had killed him, fled away. This was before Henry's short Restoration. During that period the would-be assassin was taken and brought to the King on his throne, who was then convalescent, and who immediately pardoned him. This last attack, from its being mentioned that Henry (when he thus acted) was only just getting well, seems to have occurred not many months before his actual death, to which it may have contributed. 'His dress was plain, nor would he wear the up-pointed horn-like toes then in fashion. He had a great aversion to the vehement knocking on his doors when a great man came.'

A nature so simple and good, so gentle and kindly even in its weakness, so unselfish and so tenderly humane, even if we have it here represented with some friendly exaggeration, points to a man who, one might suppose, could not have made an implacable enemy, and must have commanded love, and moral if not intellectual respect, from all classes. His peculiarities might be tiresome and a little irritating, but proceeding from such a man, could provoke, one would think, no deep feeling of resentment. His kindliness was of a far nobler and more

sterling character than that of Henry the Third, just in proportion as he was morally so much better a man. The influence exerted by such a disposition on those around him and on the kingdom at large must, one would have supposed, have been a tranquilising and beneficent one. Yet we find his reign one continued succession of violence, anarchy, and misgovernment. And this was, to a considerable extent, the result of the one great defect in the character of Henry,—his intellectual weakness, fostered, if not produced, by constitutional disease.

This disease was afterwards so marked that it must have existed even in his early years, though he is not responsible for the misrule which prevailed during that period. A child of five months at his father's death, in his sixth year he was transferred from the care of a governess to that of Richard de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, a man better fitted to train up another Henry of Monmouth than such a child as Henry of Windsor must have been. Some writers have conjectured that his stern want of sympathy may have cowed and broken the spirit of the boy, and so brought on the feebleness of his subsequent conduct. This hypothesis is chiefly grounded on the character of the Earl, and on the application he made for increased powers for correcting the child when he arrived at the age of ten. It seems that young Henry had then already shown the besetting and fatal defect of his character,—a pliability in

the hands of those who made great professions of personal devotion to him. Warwick complains that people have access to him who put into his head notions of self-importance, and make him insubordinate to correction. Of course, no one could expect in a child of such an age a power to discriminate between flattery and true friendship; but unfortunately the want of all power of discriminating character became more palpably and more fatally evident as Henry grew up; and by this, and his equally unfortunate tendency to yield in everything to those in whom he had for the moment confidence, his virtues became useless, and often even were turned into instruments of evil and injustice. Then he was in the hands, during his early years, of ambitious men, who allowed him no legitimate means of forming his mind by the observation and consideration of State affairs, and who employed the influence they successively obtained over him to the advancement of their own selfish interests, or the overthrow of their personal rivals. Humphrey of Gloucester may have been a much better man than the Cardinal Beaufort; York and the Nevilles may have been far better statesmen than Suffolk and Somerset; but the King was the victim of the personal policy of all, and, perhaps necessarily from his natural feebleness of mind, a mere puppet and tool in the hands of all. He had no opportunity given him of strengthening his mind, even if he had

been capable of so doing. Had he married a wife of good sense and right feeling, something of the evil might have been remedied; for a good and clever adviser, with the opportunities and identity of interests of a wife, was all important to such a man. But Margaret of Anjou, though a woman of ability and force of character, was overbearing and vindictive, narrow-minded, prejudiced, and in her way also a tool in the hands of others. It was not without reason that her father warned her, as he did the King, on this latter point. Fond of directing, herself, she became the tool of favourites who flattered her pretensions, just as the King, with his love of giving advice, was always following the bad advice of unworthy people about his person. The testimony of Dr. Gascoigne, Chancellor of Oxford, who died before the deposition of Henry, is suggestive on this point. 'If the King ever becomes angry with any of his servants for detected falsehood, he forgets the fault the next day, and praises and obeys the false counsellor as if he had never done wrong.' The same writer tells us that 'many persons told Henry the Sixth that famous preachers, doctors, by their preaching against the sins habitual in his Privy Council, caused animosities among the people against him. Yet the public injuries, and the annual taxes and tithes, and the alienation of the goods of the Crown, and the want of justice from the judges of the Church and kingdom were so manifest and

so numerous, that if these preachers wished to have been silent, the very stones, that is, the popular multitude, would have cried out.' The Church, the especial object of Henry's own devoted attachment, was as corrupt as the State administration. Even touching the point on which Henry was himself so earnest in his wishes, 'immoral young men' were promoted in the Church, 'whom' (says the aggrieved Chancellor) 'I myself knew to be unable to pronounce Latin, and who did not even receive their own revenues, but sent their servants to take and spend them.' Thus the earnest, saint-like King, partly through absolute intellectual inability, partly through trusting to others what he ought to have seen to himself, lent himself to every kind of mal-administration, and became unconsciously associated in his acts with falsehood, cruelty, extortion, irreligion, in fact, with everything that was the most abhorrent to his own feelings and principles; and even in his most lucid periods lent his presence and the sanction of his apparently willing assent to acts of such doubtful and contradictory character, as at length to destroy all feeling of regard and sympathy in a people who had long clung to him against the ambitious schemes of the rival House of York. When the Duke of York first put forward his claims to the crown, the popular feeling was still so kindly towards Henry, that the temporary compromise effected was a necessity for the victorious party; but when Henry

fell at a later period into the hands of his enemies, he could be paraded through the streets of the metropolis, with his legs tied ignominiously under his horse, without evoking any expression of popular sympathy or pity. The farce of a good King who lent his name and seeming assent to all evil was at last played out, and Henry died in the Tower of London, with the usual circumstances of mystery attending a death in that terrible prison, leaving behind him the curious double reputation of a saint at whose tomb miracles were said to be worked, and whom the son of his brother, Edmund Tudor, tried to induce the Pope to canonise, and of one of the most worthless sovereigns that has sat on the English throne. This worthlessness is explained by the simple fact that he was so much occupied with his religious services, and with giving moral advice, that he himself forgot to reign, and was never really a King at all.

EDWARD THE FOURTH.

ANY attempt to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion respecting the real conduct and character of Edward the Fourth, is attended with the difficulty to which I have already alluded in speaking of the Princes of the House of Lancaster, and in a still higher degree. Not only are the contemporary accounts few and meagre in the extreme, as well as the materials from other sources; but these contemporary chroniclers, with one solitary exception, are either strong Lancastrians, or did not compose their histories until after the battle of Bosworth and the overthrow of the House of York, when it had become the fashion and their interest to exalt the Lancastrian interest at the expense of the memory of its rival. One circumstance, however, has, to some degree, operated in favour of Edward's personal fame,—his being the father of Henry the Seventh's wife and Henry the Eighth's mother. Influenced, no doubt, by this consideration, the writers of the Tudor period, while they studiously decry the Yorkist as opposed to the Lancastrian cause, have been

induced to soften their censure of the first sovereign of the former family, and indulge in some panegyric, while not concealing the salient faults of his character. Thus, in a personal point of view, we have, perhaps (between these conflicting influences), in their delineations, as far as they go, a greater approximation to impartiality and the actual truth than is often met with in contemporary writings.

The difficulty in arriving at an estimate of Edward does not in fact lie so much in our imperfect knowledge of the facts of his life and conduct, as in the task of deducing from these anything like an intelligible and consistent character. Never have the intellectual and sensuous, the masculine and the voluptuous qualities been presented in any King in greater intensity and in more strikingly antagonistic contrast. The King and the Man seem both alike to resolve themselves into several independent and thoroughly dissimilar persons, each of whom has his history and each of whom has left behind a strong impression on his times; and so distinct appears to be the action of each that we are inclined to ask, not only Which is the real Edward? but Had the real Edward any paramount and governing characteristic at all? And yet all these distinct phases of character seem to be established on satisfactory evidence, and the problem appears to have puzzled and misled contemporaries as much as it does ourselves, and to have baffled to some extent even the crafty insight

of Louis the Eleventh of France. The present portrait, therefore, must be presented with considerable diffidence and a certain amount of reserve.

The antagonism begins in Edward's physical constitution and personal appearance. 'King Edward,' writes in the early Tudor period Polydore Vergil (who had excellent means of information, and considerable discrimination in availing himself of them), 'was very tall of personage, exceeding the stature almost of all others, of comely visage, pleasant look, broad-breasted, the residue even to his feet proportionably correspondent.' Sir Thomas More describes him similarly as 'a goodly personage, and very princely to behold; of visage lovely, of body mighty, strong and clean made.' That he was handsome to an uncommon degree all writers concur in stating. De Comines, who knew him, twice mentions that he was the most beautiful prince he had ever seen, or of his time; and De Comines, as a counsellor of the Duke of Burgundy and Louis the Eleventh, had ample opportunities of making such a comparison. A story is told, though we do not possess it on contemporary authority, which is not in itself improbable, and at any rate illustrates the popular tradition of this personal beauty and attractiveness. He asked an old lady what she would give him towards the war, and she replied, 'For thy lovely face thou shalt have twenty pounds!' which was twice as much as the King expected, who thanked and kissed her.

This personal beauty was, no doubt, the source of what we may call the effeminate side of Edward's character. It made him a magnificent fop, and with the natural temperament of which it was the index, made him also an epicurean of the first water in every part of his ordinary life,—an unrestrained glutton, an indolent and self-indulgent voluptuary, and a reckless and unscrupulous seducer. De Comines says he indulged himself in a larger share of ease and pleasure than any prince in his time. To the same writer it appeared that 'his thoughts were wholly employed upon the ladies, on hunting, and on dressing. In his summer's hunting, his custom was to have tents set up for the ladies, where he treated them often in a splendid and magnificent manner.' He did not confine his entertainments to the upper classes; indeed, it became more and more his custom, as his life advanced, to mix familiarly with all classes. The London citizen Fabyan, writing at the beginning of the Tudor period, tells us that 'in July, 1481, the King invited the Mayor and part of the Corporation to a hunt in Waltham Forest, and feasted them with a rich dinner and wine in a bower of green boughs, and gave them plenty of venison at parting. The next month he sent two harts and six bucks to the wives of the Mayor and Aldermen with a tun of wine to drink with them." His Court was a model of stately magnificence. He was very fond of music, and very liberal in his allow-

ance to his minstrels. He took great pleasure in setting off his fine person to the best advantage, and in introducing new fashions in dress. His tailor, Guillemi Pault, had an allowance of a shilling a day, and five pounds a year from his purse. The new fashion that he chose for his last State dresses was to have very full hanging sleeves, like a monk's, lined with the most sumptuous furs, and so rolled over his shoulders as to give his tall person an air of peculiar grandeur. A Sumptuary Act gave him an opportunity of fixing the distinctive marks according to dress of every grade of society, from the cloth of gold of the Royal Family, down to the cloth of two shillings a yard and under of the labourer, servant, or artificer. For Edward, with all his familiarity among various classes, was a great stickler for distinctions of rank. Women's Rights, however, were recognised by a proviso that the Act should not extend to the wives of any but the two-shillings-a-yard class. Unless he is belied, he was as curious in his amatory as in his sumptuous tastes. He used to say, we are told, that he had three mistresses who excelled in three distinct properties. One was the wittiest, another the williest, the third the holiest harlot in his kingdom.

His great self-indulgence brought on during the last part of his life a corpulence which injured his personal appearance, and which also contributed, no doubt, in a great measure to his premature death

before he had completed the forty-first year of his age. It impeded the activity of movement, and lessened the promptness of action, which once distinguished him, and which sprang, too, from a strong *physique*, and an energetic and powerful mind. The same self-indulgence, at a comparatively early period, gave a wrong impression of his capabilities, and so brought upon the King disappointments and dangers which probably he would otherwise have avoided. De Comines deemed him a man of no great insight or foresight. The Earl of Warwick, while abroad, gave out, at any rate, that he looked on him as a very weak prince; and Louis sometimes also professed to despise him, though he prided himself on no part of his policy so much as on the warding off of Edward's invasion of France. The inaction and seeming indifference of Edward no doubt really deceived many others, and induced them to miscount on his inefficiency at the moment of trial. But in England, at any rate, as time wore on, the King's real character became better understood, and it was known that the lion, though slothfully couchant, was not sleeping; that although the spring from repose might be sometimes deferred too long for safety, yet when it came it was well aimed and terribly effective. From his father Edward had inherited, together with good looks and popular manners, powers of great bodily activity and endurance, an unwearied and indomitable energy and persever-

ance, a determined will, a mind of no common clearness and grasp, and a spirit which, when roused, could be as fierce and unrelenting as it was ordinarily good-natured and humane. When the emergency called for the exercise of these powers, the pleasant indolent voluptuary became another man, and woe to those who had calculated on his inertia! Nor was he altogether lost in pleasure-seeking, even in his most epicurean moods. We find that he distributed persons throughout the country, among the manors and strongholds, in various places of position, whose duty it was to watch carefully all that went on in the heart of society, and send him regular and minute accounts of events and of men. These he carefully perused and mastered, and as his memory was extraordinary, he never forgot what he had thus learnt, and is said to have acquired an unrivalled knowledge of the workings of English society, and of the characters of individual men throughout the kingdom. All England learnt this in time, and all England was awed into quiet by the knowledge, and even crouched under his omnipresent administration. Thus, while he seemed to be a mere trifler and man of pleasure, he quietly watched the play of the social chessboard, and if he sometimes delayed his own decisive move until it was too late, he did so from over-finesse, rather than from ignorance or indifference. For, like other able men, he rather liked to disguise his ability in ordinary times, and to

affect an *insouciance* and indolence which had no existence in fact. His confidence in his own resources and power of turning the tables suddenly against an adversary, led him sometimes to let the dangers accumulate until the immediate result was a rather humiliating defeat. He delayed so long any preparations against the threatened invasion of Warwick in 1470, and so coolly neglected the warnings of his brother-in-law of Burgundy, that he found himself in a few days a seemingly hopeless fugitive, seeking shelter and craving assistance in the very quarter from which the timely warning had proceeded. How wonderfully his brave spirit supported him under these circumstances, and how great was the display of wise daring and equally effective prudence, patience, and self-restraint during the memorable expedition which ended in his restoration to power, nothing but a perusal of the contemporary and authoritative narrative of that revolution which we fortunately possess can convey any idea of.

The reader, however, of that narrative must go to its perusal with no idea of finding excessive scrupulousness on the part of Edward. He was probably not worse, and perhaps better, on the point of veracity than most of the leading men of his age; but he had nothing of the sacred regard for a promise which marked the character of his rival Henry when he was left to his own better mind. Edward was not

an habitual liar or perjurer, but he scrupled at neither lie nor perjury, nor any other deceit, when he thought the occasion called for it. He was a very scrupulous observer of the forms of religion, perhaps all the more so because he so frequently violated the substance. He had entered on his reign with a prejudice against the Church, which had been generally the supporter of the House of Lancaster, and during the first ten years of his administration he seems to have incurred the displeasure of the ecclesiastics, and to have in one instance, at any rate, interposed his veto to prevent an enactment which would, under the cover of common fame, have placed the life of every suspected Lollard at the mercy of any personal enemy. But after his restoration, Edward seems to have felt the necessity of courting, or at least conciliating the Church, and we find him praised by clerical writers as an ardent enemy of heresy, and judicious and liberal patron of the clergy.

It is a difficult question to answer whether the government of Edward was really popular. Personally, as we know, he was popular at the beginning of his reign, and also for the most part during his second term of government. His personal and administrative popularity had certainly declined at the time when Warwick overthrew him; the authoritative account of his restoration already alluded to leaves no doubt on this point, especially as relates to the feelings of

the Londoners, usually his greatest admirers. The Rolls of Parliament (meagre in the extreme during this reign) are silent as to any complaints of grievances, and contain no Act for the redress of any such. But we know that Edward first introduced the illegal device of extra-Parliamentary Benevolences, and the quasi-Parliamentary assembly which, after his death, invited his brother Richard to assume the Crown, speaks out plainly and indignantly against the system of government under which the nation had groaned. There probably was a designed exaggeration in this statement, in order to support the deposition of Edward's son, but the account given of Edward's system of espionage leaves an impression of terrorism.

The probability is that Englishmen bore with much without complaint through fear of the miseries of a renewed civil war. The character of the King himself, and of his government, also was such as to lull any disposition to resistance. Although he resorted at times to illegal means of raising money, Edward (during his second government) depended far more on his power of economising on the money which he obtained in a regular manner. There was comparatively light, regular taxation during this period, and the King, who had found an empty exchequer, left, it is admitted by unfriendly writers, a very full one, and a nation growing rapidly in wealth and prosperity. This prosperity and wealth

arose partly from the King's support of municipal privileges and patronage of commercial enterprise, and still more from his abstinence from needless wars, and his discouragement of an habitual warlike spirit. Most skilful and successful as a soldier as he was, and flinging himself as he did into any enterprise with the spirit of a crusader or knight-errant, Edward had no penchant for war in itself, and disliked and despised fruitless and purposeless warfare. Although nothing would have tended more to establish his throne *for the moment* than the reconquest of France, and though he himself was very desirous of checking the increasing power of Louis the Eleventh, he never would commit himself and the country to such an undertaking without fair prospects of rapid success. He landed once in France with a great army, but it was because he had an assurance from the Duke of Burgundy of his zealous assistance; but on Burgundy failing him altogether, he had no scruple —his courtiers had still less—in receiving a sum of money and an annual payment from Louis, and withdrawing his army. On another occasion, he had abandoned his preparations for a similar expedition, on a like desertion of the Duke of Bretagne. That he should not care to interfere by arms to prevent the annexation to the Crown of France of the dominions of either of these princes may have been a mistake in policy, according to the views then generally entertained, but will not be imputed as a

great fault by politicians of the present day. His foreign policy, indeed, generally wise and successful, though not ambitious, received some sort of dishonour in this matter, owing to the belief that his inaction was caused or assured by the promise which Louis held out to him of a marriage between the heir to the French Crown and Edward's eldest daughter; and his anger at the breach of this engagement is said to have contributed to the fatal result of the King's last illness. But if in this case his wife's ambition (to which his desire for this match was attributed) seconded too strongly the restraining influence of his constitutional love of peace, the effect of this temperament in general was most beneficial on the nation at large. A state of peace became the rule instead of the exception in their daily life, and the arts and habits of peace rapidly superseded those of war. And with peace came Caxton and his printing-press.

Had Edward lived a little longer, this state of things might have been considerably modified. The deceit of Louis had not only wounded his pride, but roused him to a more lively consideration of the growing power of an astute and unscrupulous rival. Though pacific, Edward would have been the last man in his kingdom to allow himself to subside into a mere cypher in the eyes of Europe, and his death probably prevented a struggle in which Louis might have found out his mistake in playing fast

and loose with a man of Edward's temperament and abilities. But Edward seems not to have taken Death into his calculations on any point. He felt so full of life, that he built up his policy at home as well as abroad too much on an assured longevity. He crushed and he overawed the great nobles, and raised up a new nobility out of his wife's relations and the strongest men who would do his service. But affectionate and devoted husband and father as he was (notwithstanding his irregularities and seeming carelessness), he forgot to provide against the danger to his family after his death, from the animosity of these depressed nobles, and he forgot that they might find a leader in one of his own blood. He left a very excellent and sensible paper of rules for his eldest son's daily life and education, but he forgot to secure his succession by binding it up with the selfish interests of the most powerful men. In his self-reliance, he was as reckless in offending them as he had been in outraging Warwick's pride; but he lived to bear the brunt of Warwick's resentment, and to weather the storm. In the present instance, the inheritance of hatred and revenge was bequeathed to a child, who paid forfeit for it with his life. But strange as it may appear, Edward, though he watched every one, was too self-confident to be easily suspicious, and trusted most men till distrust became a manifest necessity.

Edward the Fourth—to condense this estimate

into a few words—was a shrewd but unscrupulous man of the world, with the aptitudes and instincts of a great conqueror and a profound statesman, and with the sense of responsibility and self-reliance of a self-made King, but with the tastes of an easy and selfish man of pleasure, and with the habits of a *roué*.

RICHARD THE THIRD.

The life of Edward the Fifth was so brief and his reign so entirely nominal, that it would be absurd to give any estimate of his character as a King of England. We see him for a moment as a child, a mere puppet in the hands of others, and then he disappears from our sight for ever, and neither contemporary curiosity nor modern research has been able to penetrate the mystery which surrounds his fate. With his uncle, who supplanted him on the throne, the case is very different, and yet we seem to know with certainty nearly as little of Richard the Third as of his unfortunate nephew. The writers of the succeeding period have left us a portrait which is of a monster rather than a man, and even the genius of a great dramatist, assuming their narratives as the basis for his creation, has hardly been able to rise above the presentment of an unmitigated stage villain. And when we endeavour to ascertain the truth or falsehood of this representation, which, notwithstanding occasional scepticism on the part of a few clever writers, has been generally received as true,

we find ourselves reduced almost entirely to a choice between the statements of unfriendly writers and the inferences as to character which we may think ourselves justified in drawing from a few ascertained facts, generally isolated, and some of which are not incapable of more than one interpretation. Under such circumstances, an estimate of Richard must be necessarily imperfect, and on some points open to doubt, but I think that some leading features in his character may be ascertained with tolerable certainty.

If the popular judgment has been so violently unfavourable to Richard, it is, on the other hand, almost impossible for any candid and impartial student of history not to feel disposed to take up the defence of a man whose memory has been exposed to such unfriendly criticism. Whether Richard was the villain he is said to have been or not, it is quite certain that his traditional character is drawn by those who were either violently prejudiced against him, or interested in blackening his fame,—the partisans or flatterers of the prince who had dethroned and slain him. Denunciations proceeding from such a source cannot fail to rouse a suspicion that something might have been said on the other side, if Richard had been as fortunate in his biographers as some of his predecessors, and we seem to be making ourselves accessories to an act of injustice in adopting without hesitation evidence so palpably one-sided. This feeling is confirmed when we find that in one instance

at least, the change of kings operated in a very suspicious manner on the tone adopted by an historical authority. One of the most violent denouncers of King Richard is John Rous, the antiquary and historian, who wrote his history under the House of Tudor. But fortunately for us, and unfortunately for his reputation, we possess a Roll of the Earls of Warwick, drawn up by him in the reign of Richard, one copy of which has escaped the politic alterations of the author. In this we find him describing Richard as 'in his realm [ruling] full commendably, punishing offenders of his laws, especially extortioners, and oppressors of his Commons, and cherishing those that were virtuous; by the which discreet guiding he gat great thanks of God, and love of all his subjects, rich and poor, and great laud of the people of all other lands about him.' Of course, an historical student will do well to distrust this panegyric as much as the subsequent denunciation, but the case may serve as a warning against receiving blindly the statements of the Tudor historians. On the other hand, we must not be misled by the fact of exceptional injustice having probably been done to the memory of Richard by these historians into the idea that he was in reality in no respect such a man as they have depicted him, and that their portrait is a pure invention, rather than an exaggeration and caricature of the real man. As far as our present materials enable me to judge,

it seems to me that, quite independently of their representations, the character of Richard is not one which is deserving of much admiration, or even of high intellectual respect. He was not, indeed, the exceptionally bad man among his contemporaries that his Tudor biographers have made him; he was probably a better man than several of those whose reputations have been whitewashed by them, but he certainly was neither a good man, nor a very wise or great Sovereign. Indeed, it seems to me, that in depicting a successful villain these writers have unconsciously given him credit for an undue amount of intellectual capacity.

The first point which requires notice with respect to Richard of Gloucester is the shortness of his life. The popular mind cherishes the idea of an elderly villain, but the fact is that Richard was killed before he had completed his thirty-third year. The actions of his life are, therefore, those of a young man, and should be judged in a corresponding light. The next point is, that the epoch at which he becomes a responsible agent in the political events of that age must be placed much later than is popularly imagined, and that consequently the time of his supposed political machinations must be limited to a comparatively few years. There was an interval in age of ten years between him and his brother Edward, and on the first accession of the latter to the throne Richard was only between eight and nine years old.

He was only just eighteen when he took refuge with Edward in Flanders, during the temporary restoration of Henry the Sixth, and he had not completed his nineteenth year when he distinguished himself by his valour in the decisive battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury, and when Henry died in the Tower. He was little more than twenty-six when his brother George of Clarence died in the same fatal fortress, and he had not completed his thirty-first year at the date usually assigned as that of the murder of his two nephews. Even his undoubtedly premature appearance on the stage of public life and the natural precocity of his character can only modify to a certain extent this consideration of his comparative youth. His political life can hardly have commenced in any true sense of the term until after his brother's restoration in 1471, and twelve years only are therefore left for the conception and consummation of all that villainy which is supposed to have culminated in the murder of the young princes; and in estimating the nature of these machinations, we must recollect we are speaking of a life between the ages of nineteen and thirty-one.

Richard, the eleventh of the twelve children of Richard, Duke of York, was born on the 2nd of October, 1452, during the short interval of tranquillity which followed the first armed struggle between the houses of York and Beaufort,—a contest in a later stage of which he himself perished. And here we

are at once encountered by the calumnies of later historians, who attribute to him a forbidding personal deformity. The truth seems to be that Richard, unlike his brothers Edward and George, was puny in growth and sickly in constitution. His person was short and slight, and though the limbs were compactly knit, he was not muscularly strong. His face, if we may judge from contemporary descriptions and existing portraits, was very peculiar. It was rather short than long, but the contrast between the broad forehead and prominent cheek-bones and the sunken cheeks gave an appearance of elongation to the whole face. The upper part of the forehead was not at all full, but there was a marked protuberance immediately above the eyebrows. The nose was well formed, and slightly aquiline, seeming to indicate sense and fair sagacity. The eyes—the interval between which was very small—seem in the portraits dreamy and self-centred, and the brow is contracted into a look of painful and anxious thought, approaching in one portrait to something almost sinister. The chin is particularly well formed, firm, but prepossessing; the lips are very thin, and closely compressed almost into a single line. The auburn hair falls in thick straight masses on each side of his face, after the fashion of his brother Edward, and indeed of that age generally. The impression left by the face is that of deep and anxious brooding, and of an intensely nervous, but highly-strung organisation.

It is certainly not a face which inspires confidence, though it excites an uncomfortable interest. It is certainly, however, not the face of a vulgar hypocrite and assassin, any more than it is that of a man of noble and frank nature. The deformity exaggerated by his maligners probably really consisted in one shoulder being rather higher than the other; he was certainly not a hunchback in the sense which the word usually implies. He was active in his habits, and courageous and enterprising in his spirit in a more than ordinary degree. His manners, on the other hand, seem to have been quiet and reserved; his eyes, as the portraits also testify, are said to have been habitually mild in expression, but became fierce and threatening when his passion was once thoroughly roused. He was courteous and pleasing in his address, and he appears to have exercised when he chose an extraordinary fascination over those with whom he came in contact. But with one or two exceptions the power he thus obtained over the minds of others was transient in its character, and, as a rule, he seems to have been unable to retain the confidence which he so strangely gained. Francis, Lord Lovell, indeed,—'Lovell our dog'—who appears to have been a ward of the great Earl of Warwick at the same time that Richard was himself under the care of the King-maker, and about whose ultimate fate such a mystery hangs, clung to Richard to the last with a fidelity worthy of the animal which gave

him his *sobriquet*. John and Thomas Howard—the 'jockey of Norfolk,' and his gallant son, Surrey, were also true in the hour of danger, but they had certainly a strong personal interest in the maintenance of the power of Richard. Most, however, of the men whom he seemed to have gained for the time, forsook or betrayed him. The two infamous Stanleys would probably have betrayed anyone, if such a course seemed to open a path to their aggrandisement. But Hastings, whom he is said to have at one time loved better than any man, and who stood by him stoutly in the first crisis of his struggle with the Woodvilles, shook off his friendship immediately afterwards, and sought his destruction. Percy, the restored Earl of Northumberland, whom he honoured and trusted, and who seemed bound to his interests, betrayed him on the very field of Bosworth. Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, who had seemed his *alter ego*, deceived him grossly, though he did not escape a just reward for his dissimulation and treachery. On the other hand, Richard won over Queen Elizabeth Woodville, and all but won her son the Marquis of Dorset, even after he was publicly credited with the murder of the Princes; and the young Elizabeth of York would have been willing, it seems, to accept the hand of Richard's son, even if the story is false that she would gladly have become the wife of Richard himself. These, again, all failed him in the hour of

need. In fact, men appeared to be won and lost again by him in an equally sudden and incomprehensible manner. It would almost seem as if Richard, while he possessed the power of discovering and appealing successfully to some strong feeling or desire in the mind of another, was not capable of grasping a character as a whole, and through this imperfect apprehension lost the hold he had at first gained. Much of his ill-judged violence, and equally ill-judged confidence, may be traced to this cause. He destroyed Hastings, whose interests, by a little judicious moderation and management, might have been identified with his own; and he alienated Buckingham by his disregard of some strong wish of the latter, after he had made him only too powerful by his lavish generosity. The extravagant confidence he placed in the Stanleys is notorious, and is alone sufficient to discredit his penetration into character. If Richard was a hypocrite and a dissembler, he certainly was a very poor proficient in his art, for an impetuous rashness and imprudence of conduct, and an impatience of difficulties, which made him always cut the Gordian knot, instead of attempting to unloose it, appear to be his real characteristics. Under this influence he was always either too violent or too generous. It seemed as if he restrained his nervous excitability, and concealed it under a smiling face just long enough to give the uncomfortable impression of a deep and designing nature, and then

gave vent to it, on some momentary occasion, with the excess and *abandon* of a man who took no thought before he acted. It was as if his judgment was not well-balanced enough for any medium between blind confidence and blind violence. His brother Edward's mind, even when seemingly palsied by sensual indulgence, was always clear, healthy, and active; that of Richard was perplexed, morbid, and restless. He gave an impression of violence and irregularity far beyond the natural import of his actions. There was scarcely a public man then alive who might not (as far as his moral character is concerned) have committed most of the acts of cruelty attributed to Richard; but by his mode of action he gave to them a character of exceptional atrocity which goes far beyond the actual fact. And so men came to attribute to him a natural and systematic cruelty that was really alien to Richard's nature, which was quite as much addicted to an excess of compassion and generosity as to anything in the opposite direction. He was accordingly credited with nearly all the suspicious deaths of the period, of several of which he was certainly innocent.

The young Edward, Henry the Sixth's son, appears to have been killed in battle, calling out to his brother-in-law, Clarence, whom he saw in the opposite ranks, to save him; and Richard had nothing whatever to do with the event. Henry the Sixth himself

died, not improbably, though not certainly, from violence; but the mere mention of the presence of Richard (a lad of eighteen) in the Tower about the supposed time of the death, is the only piece of evidence to connect him with the deed, and as the Queen and family of Edward were also resident in the Tower at the same time, this comes to very little. Clarence's destruction appears, from the indictment against him, to have been the work of the Queen's family. The executions of Hastings and of Rivers and the other members of the Woodville family have all the appearance of acts committed at the instigation of some sudden feeling of resentment and alarm. The Woodvilles were only committed to safe custody as long as it seemed that Hastings was their enemy; they were executed after the seizure and execution of Hastings had probably led to the disclosure of some more of the facts of their recent plotting with that nobleman. The death of Hastings was evidently an act of resentment and alarm on the discovery of the hostile position he had suddenly assumed. Of the death of the young Princes it is not easy to speak, since we really know nothing as to their fate. But the probability seems to be that something like the common story actually happened; and, at any rate, Richard must be held responsible for their disappearance, since he never produced them, when it became his manifest interest thus to refute the accusations against him. That he certainly gave special rewards

to the men to whom common opinion afterwards attributed the deed is a fact of comparatively little weight, since the most trusted of his confidential agents would be just those to whom the public would be likely to assign the commission of the deed; but the coincidence of the reward of these persons with the supposed time of the Princes' deaths is of slightly more importance. On the other hand, the conduct of Henry the Seventh to the man who had the charge of the Tower at the time of the supposed murder, and to whom the arrangement of the deed was popularly attributed, is very strange, on the supposition that that King believed the accusation against him to be true. The hypothesis that this alleged assassin, Sir James Tyrrell, revealed the fact of his complicity in the murder only on the eve of his subsequent execution for treason is purely gratuitous, and comes to nothing, as Henry could always have easily ascertained if Tyrrell had the custody of the Tower at the time of the alleged murder. On the whole, we must rest satisfied with the leading facts, that the Princes disappeared in the autumn of 1483, just in the crisis of an attempted insurrection in their favour, and that Richard (as far as our present knowledge allows us to speak) never denied that they were dead, had himself crowned again at York just about that time, and never produced the boys when the partisans of Henry of Richmond proclaimed their murder, and when their re-appearance would

have been a deathblow to the hopes of that pretender, and a matter of comparatively little risk to himself. It is probable, then, that Richard, without premeditating their deaths, had them destroyed on a sudden access of nervous alarm, and thus gave another signal proof of his fatal impetuosity and want of judgment. There can be little doubt that the deposition of the young King Edward was not an unpopular act, and that Richard, if he had ruled with ordinary steadiness and moderation, might have defied all the efforts of the young King's partisans; while the boy's existence was always an obstacle to the claims of Henry of Richmond, and of all other possible pretenders. But by destroying him thus hastily, Richard not only threw away his best card and committed an unwise and unnecessary crime, but broke up the Yorkist party for ever, and gave a cry to all his adversaries of which they eagerly availed themselves. It is not at all impossible that Buckingham (whose pretensions to the Crown were notorious) made Richard his cat's-paw to remove one great obstacle in the young Princes, and then tried to avail himself of the odium thus caused to destroy Richard himself. The subsequent attempts of Richard to conciliate Queen Elizabeth and the Woodvilles, and to unite their interests with his own, were a vain effort to escape from the consequences of this and other previous political blunders.

The public policy and government of Richard were

marked by the same general character of discontinuity, and excess in opposite directions, which marked his personal acts. He was always either the ardent reformer and rigid censor of morals, or the lavish patron and the ostentatious imitator of his brother's stately magnificence. He did many worthy things, and corrected several abuses; but his government was unsystematic, his policy changeable and inconsistent, and his good and evil acts alike intermittent and disproportionate to the occasion. Such an administration is even more hostile to a settled state of society than one of unmixed and consistent evil. The sense of personal insecurity and the nervous alarms to which he was himself subject, seemed to communicate themselves to the kingdom over which he ruled; and without any definite causes of complaint against his government, and with a certain consciousness that he was in some respects an able, and, generally, not an ill-disposed ruler, the nation at large longed for a termination of his reign, and at length submitted quietly, though without any eagerness, to the succession of a man of whom they knew nothing, except that he belonged in some way to the Royal family of England, and had relieved them from a state of painful uncertainty and suspense.

That Richard was not sufficiently a bad man to be beyond the pangs of remorse has been deduced from the fact of the numerous chantries he erected in the places connected with some of his violent acts to

pray for his own soul or those of his victims. But this act was probably as much one of superstition as of regret, for his nervous temperament seems to have rendered him particularly sensitive to superstitious feelings. But a feeling of remorse and a sense of retribution may have mingled with the bitter agony with which, according to a tolerably reliable chronicler, he was tortured almost to madness on receiving the news of the death of his only legitimate son, on the anniversary of the death of his brother Edward. Richard was a deeply-affectionate father and a devoted husband, and there is probably no calumny more baseless than that which attributes to him the gradual poisoning of his wife, soon after the sad event with which they had both been nearly distracted. Anne was of a consumptive family, and her death was probably precipitated by that of her son.

On the whole, as far as I can read his character, Richard was no deliberate villain, and not in natural disposition evil-minded or cruel. But his character and his acts were the result of a disordered nervous temperament, and an impatient and unstable will. As the second man in the State, under a sovereign (such as his brother Edward) whom he trusted and looked up to, he might have been an able and high-minded administrator. When left to himself he had neither judgment nor self-confidence, and became a violent man and an unsatisfactory ruler.

HENRY THE SEVENTH.

With Henry Tudor, or, as he is generally called, from his title before his accession to the Crown, Henry of Richmond, we commence a new era in English history. He belongs essentially to that class of founders to which we have already alluded, and of which the Conqueror, Henry the Second, and Edward the First, were our three previous examples. But this inauguration of a new state of society was not merely personal to Henry, or confined to England, but was the characteristic of the age in general. The reign of Louis the Eleventh had introduced a new epoch into French history, and Ferdinand of Aragon was doing the same for the dominions over which he ruled, either in his own right or in that of his wife. All Europe was passing at very much the same time from the latest stage of feudalism to a sort of imperialism—from the government of the great nobles and the privileged corporations of the middle-classes, to the central executive of the Crown, paramount either *over* or *through* the old constitutional and administrative organisations. Everywhere

Courts and Royal Cabinets were superseding chartered institutions and customary law, and becoming practically the only authoritative exponents of the national wishes and policy. With such a revolution Diplomacy became naturally the chief agent in international relations, to which the prejudices and the warlike or pacific dispositions of the different populations were quite subordinated, and all statesmanship, even where it referred to the internal affairs of a particular country, was conducted in the spirit if not with a view to the interests of foreign diplomacy. Unfortunately, what the world thus gained in breadth of view, and superiority to national habits and prejudices, it lost in morality. Although the domestic statesmanship of the European rulers had not hitherto presented many features worthy of commendation, there was a certain restraining and modifying influence produced by the fact of the policy pursued being to a great degree the reflection of popular feelings, and to a corresponding degree a subject of interest and consequent supervision on the part of the people. But the more complicated and *professional* character of the statesmanship which now succeeded was beyond the control and comprehension of the general public, and a national policy was replaced by the statecraft of a few royal families, or a few great ministers. And yet at the same time that it became thus *personal* in its character, it lost that sense of personal responsibility which is the

great safeguard of high principle. Men who, if they had considered their acts in the light of personal honour, would have disdained to lie or betray a trust, did so without scruple when the sense of personality was merged in a vague professional agency. Their policy became more personal, while their conscience became a *corporate* one—only another expression for no conscience at all.

It was into a world which was becoming thus revolutionised that Henry of Richmond was born, and of this new statemanship he became one of the most striking embodiments. From the first he seemed predestined to such a position, for he had been brought up in a cosmopolitan school. He was born at Pembroke Castle in the early part of the year 1457, a few months after the death of his father, Edmund Tudor; and his mother, Margaret Beaufort, was at the date of his birth herself only a child of fourteen. He was born in the midst of civil convulsions, and was marked out by his family connections for a life of vicissitude and danger. On his father's side he was descended from the Royal family of France, on his mother's from that of England. Henry had, it seems, a better title than he himself knew, the original legitimisation of the Beauforts having been without any reservation of royal rights; but strict titles, however useful in the formal announcement of pretensions, were of little use practically in those days, unless backed by external interest and

personal character; and Henry stood in that ambiguous position in which circumstances might at any time give a weight to his person and pretensions quite irrespective of their exact legitimacy.

His personal appearance as King of England was somewhat remarkable. The offspring of a premature marriage, he was sickly in constitution, and probably had from the first within him the seeds of consumption. But his health seemed to improve as he grew up, and it was not till the last few years of his life that the badness of his constitution became painfully manifest. He was of full middle height; and his body 'lean and spare.' His complexion was very fair; his eyes were grey, and his hair thin. He was 'of countenance merry and smiling, especially in his communications,' observes one of the chroniclers. From several anecdotes we gather that he had a quiet and dry humour, and that it was not difficult to excite him to laughter. His bearing on public occasions was peculiarly engaging, and the popular cry on his entry into York soon after his accession was, 'King Henry! King Henry! Our Lord preserve us that sweet and well-favoured face!' The late Mr. Bergenroth, who recently calendared for the English Government the State Papers at Simancas bearing on this reign, fully confirms this demeanour of Henry. 'All foreign diplomatists,' he says, 'who had any business to transact with him, mention the vivacity of his expression, and especially

the liveliness of his eyes. He liked to speak French, of which language he retained a perfect command to the end of his life. On the whole, he looked more like a Frenchman than an Englishman. He did not sympathise with the peculiarly national mode of thinking, and had imbibed so little of English prejudice that he did not even hate the Scots. Henry would have very much liked to employ foreigners as his servants, but was afraid of hurting the feelings of his subjects. He looked old for his years, but, as Pedro de Ayala observes, not older than might have been expected, considering the cares and troubles he had undergone.' That Henry should be un-English in his appearance and to a considerable extent in his feelings is not to be wondered at, considering his origin and the circumstances of his early life. His father was the son of a Welshman and a Frenchwoman—Queen Catherine, the widow of Henry the Fifth; he was born in Wales, and he passed the first fourteen years of his life in that principality, which then still preserved to a great extent its distinctive customs and feelings. The next fourteen years, during which his habits and modes of thought would be mainly formed, he spent in Britany or in France. It was only at the expiration of that period, when he had attained an age at which the character of a man is considered to be tolerably matured, that he became an inhabitant of England, and had any opportunity of being sub-

jected to the influence of English *national* characteristics; for the Englishmen with whom he associated during his residence abroad could give him only the personal and partial impressions of exiles and conspirators, and his natural adviser, his uncle Jasper Tudor, was himself a Welshman, and in a prolonged exile was losing any English habits and sympathies which he might have once acquired. It is no small testimony to Henry's sagacity and superiority to circumstances, that, with such an early training, he acquired after his accession such a thorough knowledge of English feelings as never to outrage them, or to give his subjects the unpleasant impression that they were being governed by a foreigner. But while the bright and cheerful tone of Henry's temperament made him peculiarly accessible to men of every grade and of every degree of intelligence and capacity, the character of his intellect was such as to guard him against forming hasty impressions either of men or manners, and to prevent his falling under the slavery of early and daily associations, while it left to him all the advantages that might arise from viewing the scene of his future labours from a distance, and with the independent eye of a foreigner. His nature, indeed, was not an emotional one. Bright looks and cheerful manners, even when, as in his case, they were genuine symbols of character, do not necessarily imply excessive warmth of heart or depth of feeling. It would

be probably doing injustice to Henry to call him absolutely unfeeling. His disposition, though not warm, was generally speaking kindly, and he certainly on some occasions displayed strong though seldom violent emotion. He has been accused of harshness and neglect in the case of his wife, and there is no reason to believe that there existed on his part any ardent feeling towards one who had been forced on him by the political necessities of his position. But Mr. Bergenroth, who is no friendly critic of Henry, declares that he has met with no instance of harshness or ill-treatment on his part towards the Queen. 'On all public occasions,' he says, 'he showed her much consideration. Sometimes even scenes occur which prove that they were not wanting in cordiality towards one another. The impression that Queen Elizabeth made upon the Prior of Santa Cruz was that she was the most noble woman in England. He thought that she suffered under great oppression, and led a miserable, cheerless life. The oppressor, however, was not the King, but the Countess of Richmond. . . . Henry,' he continues, 'was not an unfeeling father. He educated his children with great care. The death of Prince Arthur was a heavy blow to him.' A contemporary account, quoted by Mr. James Gairdner in one of his valuable introductions to the publications under the authority of the Master of the Rolls, describes the scene which ensued on the communication of the

intelligence to the King by his confessor, and the sympathy and reciprocal support under their sorrow between the King and Queen there pourtrayed is very unequivocal. Mr. Bergenroth notes that, during the latter part of his life, Henry 'kept Prince Henry constantly with him. Though he might have had political reasons for doing so, merely to prevent any communications taking place between him and the Spanish party, there is no doubt that he was also actuated by another and nobler motive, the wish to form the character and sharpen the intelligence of his son.' Nor was Henry's severity towards the Princess Catharine after Arthur's death (according to a Spanish ambassador who was unfriendly to the King) greater, but less than she deserved by her conduct. There can, however, be no doubt that the tendency of Henry's temperament was towards coldness, and the position in which he was placed would naturally increase any such disposition. From his boyhood he had led a life of danger and distrust. The Prince who for his own purposes kept him to-day at his Court, might for those purposes deliver him to-morrow into the hands of his enemy. The exiles with whom he associated might at any moment make their peace at home by betraying his confidence, if not his person. From the first he was involved in a mesh of political machinations, and was compelled to regulate every tone and act, and every thought, more or less by

political considerations. That he should be able to preserve vivacity and cheerfulness under such circumstances is sufficiently astonishing; and it would be asking too much from a disposition naturally placid that it should in such a case ripen into frankness and generosity.

However little such a temperament may be satisfactory in itself, there can be no doubt that it harmonised only too well with that diplomatic tone of the Age, of which I have already spoken. Henry was not only born into, but seemed born especially for, such an epoch in society; and while his character was by no means improved in a moral point of view by his contact with European diplomacy, in respect of intellectual ability as distinguished from moral dignity, there are few instances of a career more remarkable, or, on the whole, more successful. In Ferdinand of Aragon he had no contemptible antagonist, indeed one of those master spirits, to contend on at all equal terms with whom is no mean achievement. And Henry had to conduct this contest at great disadvantage. Ferdinand's great rival was France, which under the recent rule of Louis the Eleventh had threatened to absorb all its neighbours. Against this power he had looked for aid chiefly in an Imperial alliance, but he was not unwilling to employ the co-operation of England, though along with the other Princes of Europe he had fallen into the error of undervaluing its power and

resources since the loss of its French provinces and its continual civil distractions. To Henry the alliance of Spain was very important, both in a personal and a national point of view. If he could cement that alliance by a marriage, he would be thus introduced at once into the greatest Marriage-group in Europe, and consequently obtain a position abroad which would react on his precarious position at home, and give it the stamp of assured legitimacy. At the same time, it would enable him to keep the power of France in check without having recourse himself to a war with that country, which he greatly desired to avoid. The English crave for revenge on France for the disastrous wars of the reign of Henry the Sixth had been revived by the encroaching policy of Louis, and it had become dangerous for any new possessor of the Crown to meet this feeling with a direct negative. Yet Henry felt that peace was essential for England at this moment, in order to afford time for the recruiting of her wasted resources, and the subsidence of the violent and anarchic feelings which had been created by a long continuance of civil war. He dreaded on his own account the effect which any appeal to the old feudal array would have in increasing the already too great power of the large landowners; and, like his ancestor, Henry of Anjou, he looked upon brute force as the last instrument of policy to be resorted to, and as a very uncertain and coarse weapon. The tendency of a state of warfare,

also, is to suspend or supersede the operation of regular law,—and law was with Henry (as with Edward the First) the favourite engine of policy, whether for right or wrong. If, then, he could play off Ferdinand against Charles of France, and Charles against Ferdinand, and yet keep from going to war himself with either, he would obtain for England a position which would conciliate public opinion at home, and create respect abroad. And in this, in the main, he succeeded. Ferdinand made him, during this contest of skill, endure not a few humiliations, to an unwise extent, indeed, for his own interests; but Henry avoided war almost entirely, and when once he was forced by Ferdinand into hostilities with France, he managed to escape almost immediately from this imbroglio in a manner which left him unassailable on the point of treaty obligations. The estimation in which he was held abroad is strongly attested by an Italian envoy. Like other great diplomatists, he sometimes, indeed, over-finessed, and towards the close of his life Ferdinand succeeded in lowering to a certain extent the great position which he had acquired for England; but it was the accident of the death of the Archduke Philip, on whom Henry had relied as his chief card against the King of Aragon, and the declining health and premature death of Henry himself, rather than any inferior sagacity in general policy, which gave an appearance of disadvantage to the latter.

For though *pacific* in his methods, as far as the action of this country was concerned, and unaggressive in his policy, Henry was by no means without pride and ambition for himself and the nation. His habit, indeed, of patient endurance, and of regarding everything in its ultimate rather than its proximate consequences, which must have been partly constitutional, partly induced by the circumstances of his early life, rendered him insensible to transient personal humiliations, and capable of meanness in the prosecution of his ulterior ends, which seems almost incompatible with any sense of personal or royal dignity, and inconsistent with the possession of an elevated or even a royal mind. But the fact seems to be that with him, as with another of the Tudor Princes,[1] the intermediate steps were so subordinated in his mind to the end, that he dwelt only on the latter as a gauge of intellectual and moral character, and felt no sense of degradation in temporary rebuffs and humiliations, so long as the result placed him on a vantage-ground; and his great and elevated general policy seemed to draw away and absorb in itself that noble generosity which is usually to be sought for in personal and special relations.

Closely connected with this peculiar temperament were the parsimony and avarice which are usually considered among the greatest blots in the Kingly character of Henry the Seventh. No doubt, the habit

[1] Viz. Elizabeth.

began with the necessities of his early position; but it was fostered by the patient calculation and self-restraint natural to his character. He had learnt that money was power, and he possessed for a long time so few other instruments of power, that it is not wonderful if he clung to this as the principal staff of his political existence. Through money he could secure or become independent of false or doubtful friends, as well as countermine open enemies. Money was an instrument of corruption, but was true, at any rate, to its possessor, if he only knew how to use it. For some time it was through money alone that he could hope to place himself on a level with the powerful princes of the Continent,—rich in vast possessions and in many subjects, but generally very straitened in pecuniary means. And by the accumulation of money in his own hands, he could become comparatively independent alike of the feudal parliament and of the privileged corporations. Money he must have, and money he managed to obtain and to accumulate by just and by unjust means. He procured what he could through the medium of Parliament, as the most *regular*, *legal*, and therefore, in his point of view, safest mode. But when the Northern and Western insurrections warned him that even a constitutional tax might be unbearable to the mass of the population, he sought the aid of nominally voluntary but really forced *benevolences* from wealthy individuals, who thus became less dangerous from

their diminished wealth, as they increased his own money-power. But he guarded even this quasi-resort to irregular means by obtaining from a subsequent Parliament the very dangerous precedent of a legislative enforcement of the so-called voluntary promises of contribution. By his inquisitions into titles and escheats to the Crown, and his heavy fines on great offenders against statutes which licence and circumstances had rendered a dead letter in their class, he added to the weight of his money-bags, and broke down still more the aristocratic predominance. 'My lord,' he said to the Earl of Oxford, who had entertained him at his seat with an ostentatious and illegal display of military retainers, 'I must not suffer my laws to be broken in my presence; my Attorney-General must speak to you about this;' and the result was a fine of 15,000 marks. One of the chroniclers tells us, 'He did use his rigour only, as he said himself, to bring low and abate the high stomachs of the wild people, nourished and brought up in seditious factions and civil rebellions, and not for the greedy desire of riches or hunger of money;' and though it is impossible to acquit Henry of the latter propensity, it is quite certain it was the overgrowth of a much wiser and nobler policy. But although a hoarder, Henry could spend freely when he thought his dignity or the occasion demanded it, and nothing could be more stately or magnificent than the Court pageants and ceremonials in which

he sought to present before the eyes of his subjects the greatness of the Royal position.

Henry was in general, from temperament more than humanity, averse to blood-shedding, and though he was as unscrupulous as Richard himself, in such respects, when he deliberately thought that policy demanded it, he generally preferred having recourse to pecuniary fines, and thus he made the very insurrections and conspiracies against him not only pay for their suppression, but become actual sources of revenue. These latter fines fell on the classes next below the aristocracy, and tamed the spirit of the upper middle-classes as effectually as his other policy did that of the great aristocracy. But with all this machinery of repression and amercement—just or unjust—there grew up a sense of general superintendence and protection for all classes indifferently, which gradually made a great impression on the spirit of the Nation. Even injustice assumed the form of Law, —and in the great majority of cases, where the machinery employed was unjust, though formally legal, the sufferers were known to be guilty of great offences against law and justice, if not in this, in other instances; and public opinion rather exulted in the strong hand of the law having reached them at last, than sympathised in the unfairness with which they were treated. Law in name, at least, and Order in substance became once more paramount in England, and it was felt that to offend against

either would bring down the certain vengeance of the Executive authority. Everything was systematic, and the very cheerful placidity of the King's countenance seemed an index of calm and tranquilising providence. Content with creating the feeling that he was inexorable against transgressors of his laws, Henry often softened the hardness of the punishment in individual cases by subsequent gifts and preferments; and in all probability, in the great outcry against Empson and Dudley after his death which destroyed them, we find rather an echo of the feelings of the upper classes than of the nation at large. Henry was really his own Minister, and the only man whom he seems to have admitted to his confidence, was an ambassador of Ferdinand and Isabella, De Puebla, of whose services he could thus avail himself without rousing the jealousy of his English subjects. For it is to the credit of Henry's sagacity, that without participating in the prejudices of the nation, he built his government and his policy alike on a national rather than a personal basis, while he gradually modified the national sentiment itself, and educated his people into habits and feelings more consistent with the advancing civilisation of the age.

Towards the close of his life, of fifty-three years, he seems to have lost to a great extent the cheerfulness and equableness of his temper, and to have exhibited much of the devout asceticism of his

mother; but the hand of Death was then already laid upon him, and mind and body were alike giving way.

As men, there is probably little to choose between Richard the Third and Henry the Seventh in point of morality. If Richard destroyed, or intended to destroy, his nephews, Henry (we can scarcely doubt) murdered the young Earl of Warwick under the forms of law, in order to satisfy the demands of Ferdinand of Aragon for greater security in the throne with which he was about to ally himself by marriage. Perkin Warbeck—whether he was an impostor or the real Duke of York—would, it seems, never have suffered death but for the significant silence which Ferdinand preserved on an appeal from Henry as to what should be his fate; but he *was* executed, after an escape which seems to have been contrived by the King himself, for the purpose of supplying a new motive for the severity. If Henry did not commit all the acts of violence which are attributed to Richard, his hand was stayed by policy and temperament, rather than by principle. Neither was naturally cruel or bloodthirsty, but neither had much moral scruple when passion or policy seemed to incite to a crime. Henry was by far the cleverer and probably much the more frequent dissembler. Reserve and early circumstances had made him such. But Henry gave to even his crimes the colour and form of law, while Richard gave to even his justifiable

acts the appearance of irregularity and violence. Between them as Kings there can be no comparison. Richard was one of the most unsatisfactory, and Henry one of the most skilful and far-sighted of our rulers. Richard reduced the Government and the Nation to the proportions of parties in a personal quarrel; Henry substituted for personal pretensions and a protracted civil crisis a national sentiment, a renovated people, and an assured state of tranquility. Richard lost his crown and his life in a vain attempt to stem a feudal anarchy; Henry laid the foundations of the modern state of English society.

HENRY THE EIGHTH.

No English King has experienced greater vicissitudes in popular reputation than Henry the Eighth. Idolised during a large part of his reign, and retaining to its close a considerable share of popularity with the mass of the population, the character thus bequeathed remained almost a sacred article of faith with the next generation. Under the Stuarts, however, it became fashionable to disparage the Tudors and their policy, and the memory of Henry, as the supposed embodiment of the Tudor characteristics, became an especial object of hostility. Still the national tradition did not entirely succumb to this new Court theory, and the misconduct and miscarriage of the Stuart Princes produced a revulsion in feeling which found vent in such expressions as that of Andrew Marvell:

> Ah, Tudor! ah, Tudor! of Stuarts enough.

It was only after the fear of a second Stuart restoration had completely subsided, and when Jacobitism from a political and religious creed became a senti-

mental romance of the drawing-room, that the disparagement of the Tudors again became fashionable, and that the character of Henry the Eighth especially became a subject of unrestrained obloquy. Elizabeth alone escaped for a time from the effects of this reaction, in consequence of the glories attaching to the memory of the overthrow of the Spanish Armada, and the attractive idea of a magnanimous maiden Queen. But 'the Royal Bluebeard' met with small mercy, and all the romance of his reign attached itself to the memories of Catharine of Aragon or Anne Boleyn, each of whom had a band of enthusiastic admirers and sympathisers, who were united only on the common ground of abusing the man who divorced the one and sent the other to the scaffold. Mr. Sharon Turner was the first to stem this tide of popular obloquy, and to endeavour to revive the fading tradition of 'Bluff King Hal;' but it was reserved for an abler writer to force the question on public attention, and to divide thoughtful opinion somewhat more evenly as to Henry's real character. Mr. Froude has, perhaps, injured to some extent the cause for which he pleads by too unqualified an advocacy, and by a theory which is too artificial to meet the misgivings of broad common sense and of instinctive morality, and the majority of Englishmen will probably rest with greater satisfaction in the more sober and modified conclusions of Mr. Brewer; but it would be doing great injustice to Mr. Froude to

deny to him the merit of having by confronting modern opinion with earlier and contemporary judgments, by an appeal to facts against prejudiced and modern perversions of facts, and by his power of literary exposition swept away a mass of misleading errors, and cleared the ground for the reception of a more faithful portraiture of his hero-king.

The basis of the character of Henry the Eighth is his physical constitution, and in no sovereign is a personal description more essential to a proper understanding of the man himself. Fortunately, we are not without the materials for such a portrait, as the Venetian Envoys at the English Court have in their communications to their own Government drawn more than one sketch of his personal appearance in the earlier part of his reign. 'His Majesty,' says Giustinian, 'is twenty-nine years old, and extremely handsome. Nature could not have done more for him. He is much handsomer than any other sovereign in Christendom, a great deal handsomer than the King of France; very fair, and his whole frame admirably proportioned. On hearing that Francis the First wore a beard, he allowed his own to grow; and as it is reddish, he has now got a beard that looks like gold. He is very accomplished; a good musician; composes well; is a most capital horseman; a fine jouster; speaks good French, Latin, and Spanish; is very religious; hears three masses daily when he hunts, and sometimes five on other days. He hears

the Office every day in the Queen's chamber, that is to say, vespers and compline. He is very fond of hunting, and never takes his diversion without tiring eight or ten horses, which he causes to be stationed beforehand along the line of country he means to take; and when one is tired he mounts another, and before he goes home they are all exhausted. He is extremely fond of tennis, at which game it is the prettiest thing in the world to see him play, his fair skin glowing through a shirt of the finest texture.' Another Venetian reports in 1515, 'His Majesty is the handsomest potentate I ever set eyes on; above the usual height; with an extremely fine calf to his leg; his complexion very fair and bright, with auburn hair combed straight and short in the French fashion; and a round face, so very beautiful, that it would become a pretty woman, his throat being rather long and thick.' He appears from other accounts to have been passionately fond of music, and to have played on the lute, organ, and harpsichord. Sagudino, secretary to Giustinian, writes in 1517 that he 'remained ten days at Richmond with the Ambassador, and in the evening they enjoyed hearing the King play and sing, and seeing him dance and run at the ring by day, in all which exercises he acquitted himself divinely.' He drew a better bow than any of his archers, and (allowing for courtly deference to his person) was an adept in the tilt-yard. Sagudino describes a joust at which he was present,

in which the King took part, there being ten knights on each side, very well mounted, and the horses being all richly caparisoned and several in cloth of gold. 'Then they began to joust, and continued this sport for three hours, to the constant sound of trumpets and drums, the King excelling all the others, shivering many lances, and unhorsing one of his opponents.' In another passage of the ambassadorial despatches we find a vivid description of the magnificent dress of the English king, when Henry was in the prime of his life and the height of his prosperity, and when everything seemed bright and joyous with King and People. 'After passing the ranks of the bodyguard, which consisted of 300 halberdiers, with silver breast-plates, who were all as big as giants, the Ambassador and his followers were brought to the King. They found him standing under a canopy of cloth of gold, leaning against his gilt throne, on which lay a gold brocade cushion, with the gold sword of State. "He wore a cap of crimson velvet in the French fashion, and the brim was looped up all round with lacets and gold-enamelled tags. His doublet was in the Swiss fashion, striped alternately with white and crimson satin, and his hose were scarlet, and all slashed from the knee upwards. Very close round his neck he had a gold collar, from which there hung a rough-cut diamond, the size of the largest walnut I ever saw, and to this was suspended a most beautiful and very large round pearl. His mantle was of

purple velvet, lined with white satin, the sleeves open, with a train more than four Venetian yards long. This mantle was girt in front like a gown, with a thick gold cord, from which there hung large golden acorns like those suspended from a cardinal's hat; over this mantle was a very handsome gold collar, with a pendant of St. George entirely of diamonds. Beneath the mantle he wore a frock of cloth of gold, which carried a dagger, and his fingers were one mass of jewelled rings."'

Such was Henry the Eighth as he appeared to the eyes of intelligent and observant foreigners, and such, no doubt, was the general impression of him on which the estimate of his character prevalent during the whole Tudor period was based, and which even the fierce religious controversies and revolutions of those days failed to alter materially. Whatever may have been the changes which time wrought in the man, we shall be tolerably safe in taking this picture as the *foundation* of an estimate of him, for, as I have already hinted, it is only through a knowledge of his physical nature that we can hope to arrive at any just conception of his intellectual and moral qualities. The basis of the character of Henry is his powerful and healthy *physique*. From this sprang his vigour of mind; from this to a great extent was drawn his moral nature, and by a reference to this his excellences and deficiencies, both mental and moral, can be best explained. With Henry the Seventh the case

had been different; the basis of character was intellectual, and the frail bodily constitution only modified and hampered a powerful intellectual organisation. But the younger Henry felt, thought, and acted as a strong and healthy, a consciously strong and healthy, and, therefore, a self-confident and self-reliant, man would naturally do. He had the magnanimity as well as the pride, the self-respect as well as the vanity and ostentation, of a magnificent bodily organisation. His acts and thoughts, both good and evil, seemed to possess a certain robustness, and his intellectual and moral perceptions to have something physical and bodily in their composition. The weaker and thinner fibres of human nature seemed to be strengthened and widened in him by this physical intermixture, while the firmer and broader were coarsened. Thus, while his character escaped from the smallnesses and mistrust of a feebler organisation, it failed in delicacy and considerateness. In the youth and prime of his life, when health was strong and every wish appeared to be within his reach, the higher and nobler features of such a character predominated, and his truly royal presence represented a truly kingly character. Hardly any one who has read the preceding accounts of his personal appearance can fail to recognise a strong family resemblance in the general portrait to his grandfather, Edward the Fourth. There are the same personal vanity and love of display, redeemed from trivial foppery by

dignity of carriage and the stateliness of a representative character as head of the State. There was also in Henry much of the sociable disposition, and preference for popular tastes and for miscellaneous intercourse with all classes, which made Edward so attractive personally to the middle-classes of England. But the temperament of Henry was not indolent, like that of his grandfather, and the more habitual activity and impetuosity of his spirit gave his manners a more boisterous and bluff character in his familiar relations than was consistent with the gay courtliness of Edward. From the same cause he was more frank and generous in his disposition than the latter; but far less consistent and much more intermittent in his governing impulses. Between them, indeed, in this respect, there was almost the difference between a mature man and a precocious boy. Henry grew up in body and mind with a premature rapidity which seemed to make him at eighteen what most men would have been at five-and-twenty. But his mind and his character never ripened much beyond the point thus attained, and his actions have all the discontinuousness and all the wilfulness of youth. When his mind and body at last underwent a change, it was not towards greater development, but to decay. Henry the Seventh was the child of adversity. Circumstances had made him prematurely old in thoughtfulness, but circumstances also kept his mind in a constant state of painful discipline, under which it

was ever receiving new lessons of experience, and developing more and more under the changing conditions of a life of great vicissitudes. But his son was the child of fortune, born in the purple, and the inheritor of a great legacy of wealth and power and national prosperity, the result of the long and anxious labours which had brought the elder Henry to a premature grave. The greater *abandon* and higher spirits of Henry the Eighth sprang nearly as much from the more fortunate surroundings of his early life as from his healthy bodily frame. When the increasing infirmities of a naturally bad constitution affected the mind of the elder Henry, his calm brightness sank into melancholy brooding. When the strong physical constitution of Henry the Eighth gave way, and disease and bodily incapacity superseded the health and activity of his prime, his manliness degenerated into grossness, his self-confidence and self-will into tyranny, and his boisterous temperament towards brutality; and this personal degeneration had a more serious result in the case of the son than in that of the father. With Henry the Seventh the State was a separate entity, to which he stood in the relation of a wise and patient Mentor. But his son identified the State with himself so completely, that the Constitution and the national welfare fluctuated or retrograded with every changing mood and vicissitude of the King himself. This was at once the strength and the weakness of England during

his reign. The nation alternately gained and suffered from the alternations in the passions of its head. While the proud sense of personal dignity of the Tudor King saved it from national degradation, and its complete identification in his own mind with himself gave a certain representative and national character to his most personal acts, the national policy and the national interests in their turn suffered by being too often narrowed to personal issues. As long as Wolsey lived and stood at the right hand of Henry as his confidential and trusted adviser, the evils of this too personal government were to a great degree moderated. Henry, indeed, never allowed any administrative act to be carried into execution unless it had received the sanction of his personal attention; but he willingly listened to Wolsey's advice. He did so because that Minister, however great intellectually, was a man from whom he had not to apprehend any pretensions to an independent and rival position. The great nobles complained that they were excluded from all posts of real trust, and relegated to mere ceremonial offices, while the Government was left in the hands of men of inferior extraction. It was not ability, but hereditary rank and independent authority that the Tudors were jealous of and distrusted. They sought for talent, graciously acknowledged its value, and employed it fearlessly so long as it remained a constituent part of their own personal administration. But they could not tolerate independent

magnificence even in an intellectually contemptible Buckingham, and they struck at it fiercely and remorselessly. There might be as many channels of authority as the Constitution or the nation demanded, but there must be only one independent head of authority, and the eyes of the nation must be drawn off to no other centre of attraction. During the first part of Henry the Eighth's reign this co-ordination of King and Minister in one great personal policy was possible, for at home there was only a stately magnificence, and a personal action operating almost entirely through the legal channels of the Constitution, though practically autocratic, and abroad the cautious and subtle, yet bold policy of Wolsey supplemented and harmonised well with the strong will and sensible instincts of the King. But when diplomacy became secondary to a great Religious Revolution, and when the natural position and traditional instincts of the Minister became incompatible with the intense personal will of the King, a divergence of interests seemed to convert a trusted counsellor into a rival and antagonist, and Wolsey fell in order that the Government might have in the eyes of the world but one presiding will. He thus lost the confidence, but scarcely the sympathy of the Sovereign, with whom he had planned and acted so long, so ably, and so faithfully. But the confidence which Henry withdrew from Wolsey he never again bestowed on any minister. Cromwell or Gardiner might seem to

stand highest in his favour, but thenceforward the policy was that of Henry alone, and with its intensified personality came a long train of attendant misfortunes. From this time the remark of Mr. Brewer holds good, that the only restraints on the autocracy of Henry were his own sense of right, and his dread of unpopularity.

The sense of right was probably much stronger naturally in Henry the Eighth than in his father, but in the case of the latter it was not so much a separate standard, to which each act might or might not be referred, as a constituent part of the whole mental system, operating almost unconsciously to moderate and gradually direct his general policy. In Henry the Eighth, when operative at all, it was very distinctly effective in its action, while in other cases its operation seemed to be suspended entirely, as if it had no existence. For although the younger Henry had been educated carefully in almost every department of mind and body, his mind had not been educated as a whole, and while the constituent parts were admirable, the directing power was often very defective. Thus it was that whim and personal will too often, especially in the latter part of his reign, took the place of any rule of life, and principle seemed at the mercy of transient impressions and successive passions. For though Henry had a great deal of conscientiousness, he had no fixed and permanent law of conscience. After the downfall of Wolsey,

the rule by which he regulated his conduct towards individuals seemed as fitful as it was purely arbitrary. One gust of feeling raised Cromwell to power, another destroyed him; one carried him towards the Reformers, another towards the old Catholic party. The very persistence with which he pursued his idea of a divorce from Catharine of Aragon was not animated so much by any passion for Anne Boleyn, as by the necessity of obeying and realising an idea which had gained the ascendant with him. His sensual passions were comparatively cold, while the fire of his will was fierce, and unquenchable even by his own better instincts. The absence of a matured and thoroughly disciplined mind produced similar effects in all his marriage affairs, and gave an appearance of inordinate and reckless passion and cruelty to what was really little else than a spasmodic attempt on the part of a strong will to escape from the consequences of its own unwise acts. Of all his wives, not one can be said to attain to the character of a really superior woman. None, therefore, had any chance of preserving an ascendancy over him in the revulsion of his feelings. He was guided in his choice by special qualities, and he was constantly disappointed in the whole nature of the woman, until at last he was forced to content himself with decorous mediocrity. Of the more delicate and retiring traits of a nobler character his own coarsely-fibred nature could form no apprehension. But with masses of

men of whom he himself was the recognised organic head, the case was different. Here his personal pride identified their appreciation of him with his own self-esteem, and he sought to be popular not only because he felt that popularity was his strongest engine of power, but because he sympathised so strongly with his subjects in their relation to him as a popular King. Unlike the Stuarts, who succeeded on the English throne, the Tudor Prince loved his people as such, and as love begets love, retained to the very last the affections of the mass of the nation. The pride of Henry was one which was roused by rivalry alone; it fed on the humiliation of the great and powerful only, and with all others, the bluff jovialty of his temperament displayed itself in the most attractive form. This familiarity in personal relations extended to petitioners, whose complaints or requests, instead of being staved off by a host of intervening ministers and secretaries, found access to the eye and ear of the King himself, and who availed themselves of this well-known fact to address him in a manner which looks very odd in a formal State document. Thus, among the Warrants to the Treasurer of the Chamber, signed by the King, we find one in favour of William Wynesbury, his Lord of Misrule, directing the treasurer to pay him 5*l.* But annexed to this is a note from the petitioner to the following effect:—'If it shall like your Grace to give me too much, I will give you none again; and

if your Grace give me too little, I will ask more.' But the King thus familiarly addressed by one of mean condition was the same prince with whom the head of no great man in his kingdom was safe on his shoulders during the latter part of his reign. With the Nation, in fact, the case stood thus. The People had the right and the means of resistance to his will, but they scarcely ever resisted or wished to do so, till at last, if they had wished, they had lost the courage to act. The King had practically the power to be a tyrant, but with the nation at large he preferred being an idolised autocrat.

We have reserved to the last the consideration of those features of the King's character which were involved in his great controversy with Rome. At the bottom, no doubt, it was a question of personal will and royal dignity, but there also entered into it the element of Henry's own taste for casuistry and theology. This was the result of a special education acting on a nature both inquisitive and devout. The devotional tastes of Margaret Beaufort seemed blended with the hair-splitting distinctions of a middle-age schoolman, perhaps derived from his long lineage of crafty British chieftains. It was subtlety of thought without refinement of perception; implying a peculiarity in the method of thinking rather than in the thought itself. The capacity for cultivation, which was inherent in every part of Henry's nature, made of him in this case a theological

pedant and an eager controversialist, while his intense force of character made him a self-sufficient and intolerant bigot. He took a distinction like a well-trained ecclesiastical logician, and he enforced it with a disregard of all opposing logic engendered by the force of his predominating animal spirits. As long as the Pope seemed a co-ordinate authority, in a separate sphere, it flattered Henry's vanity that he should stand side by side with the 'Most Catholic' and 'Most Christian' Kings as the 'Defender of the Faith.' But the tendency of spiritual as well as of every other authority in England had for some time been to merge itself in the civil power, and as Henry absorbed more and more in himself the functions of the whole State, the supreme spiritual authority became almost insensibly vested in him, and at last a desire to act on the dictates of his own will in a particular case revealed to him the fact that the Pope was a rival and controlling authority in his own domain, instead of a useful orthodox piece of spiritual machinery in an outlying province. He tried to make the machine work according to his will, and when that failed he resolutely threw it aside, acted for himself, and became himself the Supreme Head of the Church. On the question of the Divorce, the rationale of his conduct probably was that the scruples as to his marriage with Catharine were kept alive by Henry the Seventh for ulterior political purposes, and were overridden by the impetuous will of

his son, to be again revived by a desire to accomplish an act which State policy seemed to demand, but which to his fitful sense of right appeared to require the additional sanction of a higher moral reason.

The same curious combination of qualities in one man seems to solve the question as to Henry's sincerity of character. In accordance with his predominant feature, he was naturally and more generally frank and truthful; but on certain occasions, when his Tudor vein of casuistry seemed to be evoked, he displayed an amount of dissimulation and double-dealing which proved that he could be to the full as unscrupulous in this respect as his politic father, though the quality of the dissimulation was somewhat grosser, and probably less effective.

It is extremely difficult to give a just estimate of the capacity of Henry as a man and a ruler. He was certainly very capable in many things, and he gives a general impression of ability as a ruler, which goes beyond any deductions that we might be able to draw from his special acts, and which is possibly produced by the force of his autocracy itself, independently of any such acts. We may, however, perhaps safely say, that he was nobler and better in his general intentions than in anything that he actually did. We see the wisdom and sagacity of the general policy, where we are struck with the ill-judged and unnecessary violence of much of the means employed to carry it into effect. At the same

time it is the iteration of these violent means which creates distrust as to the justice of the special act, more than the circumstances of each act considered in itself. It may be comparatively easy to show some plausible cause in each case for the execution of Buckingham, of More, of Fisher, of Cromwell, of the descendants of the House of York, and of the other victims of supposed political necessity; but the collective effect of such a number of executions is fatal to the character of Henry's system of administration. Whatever may have been the excellence of the ends proposed, the means chosen must have been singularly ill-judged to entail the necessity of such continual bloodshedding. His nature was too undisciplined, and too much at the mercy of his self-will, and of feelings roused by chance occurrences to be a safe agent of his own policy. The wisdom of his original ideas was too often perverted or lost in the very act of carrying them out. The breach with Scotland, in the autumn of 1542, when he wasted with fire and sword for nine days a country which it had been his studied policy for years to unite with England in future years, under one government, is a striking illustration of this want of statesmanlike foresight in his actions. In fact, if Henry designed his ends in the spirit of a statesman, he too often pursued them in the spirit of one who seeks rather than avoids causes of offence and opportunities of violence; and though the national

verdict of those days may have acquitted him of blame from a feeling of attachment to his person, and a general appreciation of his intentions and his ability, modern opinion will probably return a qualified answer to the same question; and, while admitting that he was often wise in his counsel, will pronounce that he was equally often unwise in act.

EDWARD THE SIXTH.

Any estimate of the character of Edward Tudor is attended with two difficulties. We have to pronounce on a character which a premature death prevented from attaining its full development, and yet we have also to deal with an abnormal boyhood, in which some, at least, of the phases of a more advanced period of life were artificially anticipated. We have to consider a character, therefore, which is neither that of a man nor a boy, but which belongs to a boy's mind forced into the appearance of full growth. The character of Edward, indeed, whatever its constituent elements may have been, was in the form in which it presents itself to our notice the product of an educational forcing-house, and of a process in which flavour and colour were to a great extent sacrificed to early and rapid development. Henry the Eighth, as I have said, was always to some extent a grown-up boy, with a mind never thoroughly developed. Edward, on the contrary, was never a boy at all, and was called upon to exercise functions for which his understanding had

only a factitious appearance of competency. His whole life, therefore, was an unreality, and to divine the motives of his actions is a task equalled in difficulty only by that of pronouncing on their moral significance when ascertained.

The physical constitution of Edward the Sixth was ill-fitted to endure the forcing process to which he was thus subjected. The circumstances attending his birth may have had something to do with this; but it is certain that, without possessing any constitutional disease, there was a natural weakness, and a want of vital power, which would have a material influence in modifying any mental characteristics, and any family peculiarities which he might have inherited from his athletic father. According to the Milanese physician Cardano, who visited England in the last year of the reign, and who fancied that he saw a look in Edward's face which foretold an early death, though he was far from imagining it to be close at hand, the young king in stature was below the usual size, his complexion was fair, his eyes grey, his gesture and general aspect sedate and becoming. The Venetian Ambassador Barbaro gives us the popular impression respecting him in the year 1551:—'He is of good disposition, and fills the country with the best expectations, because he is handsome, graceful, of proper size, shows an inclination to generosity, and begins to wish to understand what is going on; and in the exercise of

the mind, and in the study of languages, appears to excel his companions. He is 14 years of age. This is what I am able to state about him.' Edward was born on October the 12th, 1537, and succeeded to the throne on January the 28th, 1547, when he was only nine years of age. He was handsome after the type of his mother's beauty, *i.e.* he had regular features and graceful bearing, but was deficient in vivacity and expressiveness. He was taken at the age of six entirely out of the hands of women, and his mind was delivered over to the educational direction of some of the most learned scholars of the day, while his body was at the same time trained in the ordinary athletic exercises and amusements of princes and nobles. He exhibited no deficiency, in any marked degree at any rate in this latter sphere —his physical powers having probably much more aptitude than strength. But in the mental school he seems, making allowance for all flattering exaggerations, to have manifested considerable intellectual power. Acquiring the lighter accomplishments, in which none of the Tudors were deficient, his own natural tastes seemed to tend to severer and heavier studies. His mind, indeed, appears to have been as narrow as it was intense, but, in such a mere lad, brought up under such exceptional circumstances, it is not possible to speak decidedly on this point, as altered circumstances might have widened his intellectual perceptions. He was called upon from

the first to pronounce on considerations which it was quite impossible that his mind could properly grasp, and he, therefore, either became a passive tool in the hands of those who had the authority or opportunity of dictating his course; or, if he asserted his independence at all, did so, not by dealing with the main issues of the question, but rather by taking exception and making a stand on some personal prejudice or conscientious scruple. For this reference of every question to certain technical standards of right and wrong, the character of the studies to which his mind had been directed naturally disposed him. His education had been a second *Cyropædia*, and his time had been passed in learning by rote the attributes of a perfect prince, and in drawing up small codes of morals, and gravely discussing abstract points of casuistry. His mind, like his constitution, rather stagnant and receptive than originative, found its self-assertion, and whatever it retained of the strong Tudor personality, in obstinacy and dogged adherence to supposed principle or tenacity of supposed prerogatives, rather than in any manifestations of active energy. A curious illustration of his character in this respect is to be found in the resistance which he offered to the free exercise of her religious rites by his sister Mary. For his sisters, as for others whom he did not dislike, he had a placid regard, and probably was not undesirous to find some valid excuse for allowing them freedom of action; but he

had been so carefully imbued with the idea that it was sin to allow idolatry in the land, that the Council, when the Emperor threatened war unless Mary's religion was respected, found it very difficult to persuade their royal pupil to acquiesce in their politic subterfuges. Dudley, Earl of Warwick, had suggested a reference of the question to the Bishops, Cranmer, Ridley, and Poynet. The Bishops asked, 'if war was inevitable, if the King should persist? Being told there was no hope of escaping it, they begged for a night to consider their answer.' They were in the main honest and conscientious men, but they were also official Christians, and 'on the following morning they gave an opinion, as the result of their deliberation, that "although to give licence to sin was sin, yet if all haste possible was observed, to suffer and wink at it for a time might be borne."' The King was then called in, and the result of the reference to the Bishops submitted to him. '"Are these things so, my Lords?" said Edward, turning to them; "is it lawful by Scripture to sanction idolatry?" "There were good Kings in Scripture, your Majesty," they replied, "who allowed the hill altars, and yet were called good." "We follow the example of good men," the boy answered, "when they have done well. We do not follow them in evil. David was good, but David seduced Bathsheba and murdered Uriah. We are not to imitate David in such deeds as these. Is there no

better Scripture?" The Bishops could think of none. "I am sorry for the realm, then," the King said, "and sorry for the danger that will come of it; I shall hope and pray for something better, but the evil thing I will not allow."' The Council, however, seem to have persuaded him to content himself for the present with punishing all who attended the Princess's mass except herself, and meanwhile delayed a positive answer to the Emperor till they had secured an alliance with France which enabled them to set him at defiance, and renew their persecution of the Princess with impunity.

Whatever may be said of the judiciousness of Edward's education in other respects, it is clear that nothing had been done to quicken or call forth the warmer feelings and sympathies of a nature naturally inert and undemonstrative on such points. His purely masculine training had taught him to regard everything and every relation from the point of duty and moral rectitude, all personal considerations being sunk in a logical conscientiousness. For that Edward was strictly and even morbidly conscientious, we see, among other illustrations, from the scene just referred to. He was much attached to his tutors, but it was in a characteristically calm and intellectual manner. Boys are usually demonstrative of feeling on this point at least, but Edward's estimate of his tutors is purely intellectual. 'King Edward,' Fuller tells us, 'used to say of his tutors, that

Randolph the German spoke honestly, Sir John Cheke talked seriously, Dr. Coxe solidly, and Sir Anthony Cooke weighingly.' So it was with his juvenile associates; he valued them chiefly on account of their mental sympathies with him. In the memoirs of one of them, Jane Dormer, afterwards Duchess of Feria, we are told that when a child of six or seven, 'while playing at cards with her, he would say, "Now, Jane, your king is gone, I shall be good enough for you," and would call her "my Jane," their natural dispositions being so correspondent to each other;' and this is one of the warmest personal demonstrations on his part that I am able to discover. Yet Edward's attachments, such as they were, seem to have been deep, though calm, and on an intellectual basis. When his tutor Cheke was very dangerously ill, Fuller tells us the King inquired of his condition carefully every day:—'At last his physicians told him that there was no hope of his life, being given over by them for a dead man. "No," said King Edward, "he will not die on this time, for this morning I begged his life from God in my prayers, and obtained it," which accordingly came to pass, and he soon after, against all expectations, wonderfully recovered. This was attested by the old Earl of Huntingdon, bred up in his childhood with King Edward, unto Sir Thomas Cheke, still surviving, about 80 years of age.' Was this fanaticism, or merely an extreme case of Tudor self-confidence, that

God would, of course, attend to a suit in which *he* had interested himself? For of the family self-confidence Edward possessed a large share, which was necessarily fostered most injuriously by the position in which he was placed. Although really a puppet in the hands of successive chiefs of his Council, he had been made from the first to play the part of an intelligent and capable man so constantly, that he naturally believed in the reality of the part assigned to him. His *Journal*, consequently, instead of being a record of boyish impressions, is a grave statement of the conduct of his life and the rationale of the Administration. The selfish policy of the men who used his name as a cover for their own wishes and acts always intruded the young King personally on the political scene whenever any important point had to be achieved, or any serious opposition had to be overcome. He was thus placed in a position of artificial self-consequence, which could not but influence his character very unpleasantly.

It was doubtless necessary to be particularly strict in enforcing the rules of royal etiquette in the case of a boy whose age might otherwise have been taken advantage of, but the effects on him of the ceremonial described by a foreign envoy could not have been good. 'No one was permitted to address him, not even his sisters, without kneeling to him. "I have seen," says Ubaldini, "the Princess Elizabeth drop on one knee five times before her brother ere

she took her place." At dinner, if either of his sisters were permitted to eat with him, she sat on a stool and cushion at a distance beyond the limits of the royal dais. Even the lords and gentlemen who brought in the dishes before dinner were bareheaded, and knelt down before they placed them on the table. This custom shocked the French Ambassador and suite, for in France the office was confined to pages, who bowed only, and did not kneel.' He was made the arbiter of the fate of two uncles, and he was called upon to lecture a sister much older than himself on the principles of theology, and to dictate to her on the rules of her own conscience. Well might Mary remark, 'Although her good sweet King have more knowledge than any other of his years, yet it is not possible that he can be judge of these things.'

The false position in which Edward was thus placed, joined to his natural self-confidence, unemotional temperament, and logical conscientiousness, affords probably the key to his strange insensibility to the fate of his uncles Lord Seymour and the Duke of Somerset. He had been made to enter fully into the question of the guilt of the former; his own personal evidence even had been produced against Seymour. His self-esteem had been thus artfully interested in the prosecution, and no doubt he had come to a logical conclusion that Seymour was guilty. That which would have pleaded with most lads of his age in favour of the delinquent—Seymour's secret

supplies of money to Edward for his personal gratification—had no weight with such a nature, when duly interpreted to him, as no doubt it was, as a mere artifice of Seymour's for his own selfish ends. Any natural love he might possess was far too weak to stand the test of what seemed to him alike a logical consequence and a duty, and he sent Seymour to the block with as little emotion probably as he would have bestowed on any other State criminal. After this, his conduct towards Somerset himself, who had taught his royal nephew thus stoically to weigh the conflicting claims of cold policy and of natural affection, is not difficult to explain. With a far nobler nature than either his brother or his nephew (as far as the character of the latter had as yet developed itself), the Protector expiated in his own person the offence against nature which he had committed in dipping a boy's hands in the blood of a relative. But the mischief did not end here. A really well-disposed and conscientious nature had, through an unfair advantage taken of a peculiarity of temperament, been introduced at a most impressionable age to a school of politics in which his father's own character had been ruined, and under the dictation of which had he lived much longer, he might himself have reproduced that terrible history of execution after execution, which only the hardest political expediency can in any degree palliate, and which right feeling and the highest

statesmanship alike condemn. It is not, indeed, just to condemn a young Prince for the foreshadowings of evil which might never have come to pass, or to attribute to a cold instinctive craving for blood, what seems chiefly the result of a too passive sensibility and a too purely intellectual education. The intellect is, no doubt, an important auxiliary in the determination of moral questions, but it is quite as open to deception as is the heart, and he who relies, as Edward did, on the former alone for his rule of action, is, at least, entitled to the same excuse which we give to the impulsive errors of a warmer temperament. Yet the prospect of the possible eventualities of Edward's career, had he lived to manhood, is not such as to make us regret his early death. A strong Tudor intellect *might* have guided his general policy rightly, but it is only too probable that by his death England escaped from an epoch of cold Augustan terrorism which would have rendered a name that is now a subject of sentimental interest, odious in the eyes of a more fortunate posterity.

MARY.

If popular reputation were to be the sole guide of our estimate of a sovereign, Mary Tudor's character would be soon depicted, and in the most uninviting colours. The name of no English sovereign has inspired in the minds of generations of Englishmen a greater feeling of horror and aversion. It is only in the present age that any attempt to discriminate between a deep and deserved censure of several of her public acts, and a wholesale condemnation of the woman herself, has been at all widely accepted, and that the terrible memories of Smithfield have been at all softened by any mitigated view of the character and motives of the author of those tragedies. Now, however, Protestant and Catholic opinion seem to be gravitating to much the same modified estimate of this unhappy Queen, and there is something like a common and harmonious recognition of her merits and her faults.

I cannot introduce Mary better than in the description given of her person and characteristics by the Venetian Michele, the year before her death. 'Queen Mary,' he writes, 'the daughter of Henry

the Eighth and of his Queen Catharine, daughter of Ferdinand the Catholic, King of Aragon, is a princess of great worth. In her youth she was rendered unhappy by the events of her mother's divorce, by the ignominy and threats to which she was exposed after the change of religion in England—she being unwilling to bend to the new one—and by the dangers to which she was exposed by the Duke of Northumberland, and the riots among the people when she ascended the throne. She is of short stature, well made, thin and delicate, and moderately pretty; her eyes are so lively that she inspires reverence and respect, and even fear, wherever she turns them; nevertheless, she is very short-sighted. Her voice is deep, almost like that of a man. She understands five languages, English, Latin, French, Spanish, and Italian, in which last, however, she does not venture to discourse. She is also much skilled in ladies' work, such as producing all sorts of embroidery with the needle. She has a knowledge of music, chiefly on the lute, on which she plays exceedingly well. As to the qualities of her mind, it may be said of her that she is rash, disdainful, and parsimonious rather than liberal. She is endowed with great humility and patience, but withal high-spirited, courageous, and resolute, having during the whole course of her adversity been guiltless of any the least approach to meanness of comportment; she is, moreover, devout and staunch in the defence of her religion. Some

personal infirmities under which she labours are the causes to her of both public and private affliction. To remedy these, recourse is had to frequent blood-letting, and this is the real cause of her paleness, and the general weakness of her frame. The cabals she has been exposed to, the evil disposition of the people towards her, the present poverty and the debt of the Crown, and her passion for King Philip, from whom she is doomed to live separate, are so many other causes of the grief by which she is overwhelmed. She is, moreover, a prey to the hatred she bears to my Lady Elizabeth, and which has its source in the recollection of the wrongs she experienced on account of her mother, and in the fact that all eyes and hearts are turned towards my Lady Elizabeth, as successor to the throne.'

Such did Mary seem to a calm observer, who was uninfluenced by feelings of either Catholic or Protestant fanaticism, and though the portrait is not quite distinct or consistent on some points, such in the main, there can be little doubt, she actually was. The general mould of her character was Spanish rather than English, though some of the Tudor characteristics are still very patent. She had all their undaunted courage, all their unconquerable persistence, much of their kingly self-respect and their feeling of moral responsibility as rulers, and of duty towards the Nation, apart from any responsibility to class or individual within that Nation. Her

natural disposition, so far as we can separate it from the attitudes into which she was forced by considerations of duty to the Church and to God, was milder than that of her father, and more accessible to warm and sympathetic feelings than that of her brother. But in her demeanour she was less graceful than the latter, and she had few of the social and popular qualities of the former. Her mind and her manners were alike stiff and formal, her courtesy was too ceremonial to be really engaging, and her dignity of bearing, though it might inspire awe and fear, failed to excite admiration, while her rigid and morbid devoteeism was quite as likely to rouse contempt for her intellect as respect for her conscientiousness. But whatever unconciliatory rigidity there may have been in her original temperament was intensified by the peculiar circumstances of her life. Her very conscientiousness was in this respect most unfavourable to her in a social point of view. Too honest as well as too obstinate to conform to the spirit of the age, and only yielding pious obedience to the personal commands of her father, Mary shut herself up in her own mind, or in a world of her own, excluding all sympathies except such as might come recommended by community of religious opinions and aspirations; and from these resources even she was almost entirely debarred by the anxious bigotry of the triumphant creed. All that seemed left to her was the patience and endurance of a martyr, and the cultivation of the

virtues of a religious recluse. Meanwhile a new generation grew up in the world without, of which she knew nothing, and which could less and less sympathise with the antiquated form of her stereotyped ideas. Even the enthusiasm of the avowed Catholics of the rising generation was coloured to some extent by the altered tone of the age, and had little really in harmony with the ancient religious type in which Mary's mind had been moulded. Still Mary waited and watched, more perhaps in despair than in hope, and with anticipations of the glories of the martyr rather than those of the rebuilder of the faith. Suddenly a door opened to her in the national reaction against the personal ambition of Dudley and Grey. The accredited leaders of the Reformation in England, in their desperation at the imminent death of Edward and the accession of a Roman Catholic Queen, had overshot the feelings of the nation, and had identified the interests of Protestantism with those of a political faction and two or three powerful families. The will of Henry the Eighth, in which the nation, with its curious disposition to compromise, had recognised some atonement for the wrongs of Catharine of Aragon and her daughter, was set aside by a political manœuvre, and the nation was called upon to assent to Queen Jane Grey as the first article of the Protestant creed. This—Catholic and Protestant alike—it revolted against. A feeling of loyalty to the immediate family of Henry the Eighth was blended

with one of compassion for the persecuted daughter of Catharine, and a really national movement placed Mary on the throne, and gave her the opportunity of vindicating her new authority by the manner in which she employed it. But while the nation saw in her accession merely the defeat of an ambitious party, the new Queen saw in it a leading of Providence to a royal work of Religious Restoration. The *rôle* of a constant martyr seemed to be suddenly changed for that of an apostle. Compared with this duty, all other considerations became nothing in her eyes. Her mind was naturally intense rather than wide, and events had narrowed its scope still more. She understood nothing of the nation she was about to lead again into the true fold, but she had unbounded faith in the will of Providence, and no little confidence in herself. By her Tudor decision and courage she had ensured the success of the movement that placed her on the throne; by the same courage and decision she maintained herself in the dangerous crisis of the Wyat insurrection, when her own adherents were on the point of abandoning her. Every act of persevering boldness in her course seemed crowned with success, and against these signs of the will and purpose of God, all counsels of prudence from Catholic subjects and princely allies availed nothing. The self-will of her father was heightened by the zeal of an apostle and the enthusiasm of a prophet. As her obstinacy raised fresh

dangers around her, and alienated more and more the sympathies of her people, so her undaunted perseverance seemed to render her almost independent of national sympathies and of popular support. The English people had welcomed her accession in no spirit of national penitence for past religious heresy, though it had begun to entertain some distrust and alarm at Dudley's ultra-Protestant policy. But Mary ordered it to humble itself in abject contrition at the feet of an offended but forgiving Sovereign Pontiff, and the Nation obeyed. The old alliances of England with the Spanish Kingdoms and with Burgundy, which once had a considerable hold on the feelings of the English middle-class, from considerations of commercial advantage, had been discredited in their opinion by becoming in the persons of Charles and Philip identified with the interests of an aggressive Papal ascendancy. Yet when the long unloved and unloving Mary, under the influence of a natural predilection for her mother's native land, as much, perhaps, as of strong Catholic sympathies, fixed her mind on a Spanish marriage, the nation, though it displayed many signs of dislike and consequent disaffection, did not rouse itself to secure the success of an insurrection against the Queen, and the marriage took place, and Philip became joint-sovereign of England. But this very success proved fatal to Mary's own peace of mind, while in its ultimate consequences it entailed a terrible addition to the unpopularity of

her reign. The Queen's passions, though constrained by circumstances and concealed under a cover of formal decorum, were intensely strong, and her love for Philip became as blindly fanatical as her zeal for the Catholic faith. Her unplastic nature was shattered by a passion to which it could not quietly assimilate itself, and there ensued the unseemly spectacle of a careworn middle-aged woman exhibiting the love-sick fancies and jealousies of a young girl. Philip, who had shrunk with aversion from the marriage, afterwards endured it with the proper courtesy of a Castilian gentleman; but he only endured it, and however the Queen might endeavour to deceive herself, she soon was only too conscious of the fact. Then came national disaster and dishonour in the train of this unhappy alliance. Her last hold on the soil of France was lost to England for ever, and the Queen, like a true Tudor, felt the disgrace even more than the nation did, for it seemed to her a condemnation also of her own cherished and self-willed policy. Her health as well as her spirits gave way more and more, and still the hateful spectre of heresy haunted the land, and a still more appalling prospect for the future presented itself in the succession of her sister Elizabeth. The vain hope of being succeeded by a child of her own faded away, and the daughter of Anne Boleyn as constantly weighed on the mind of Mary, as she was constantly present to the heart and the hopes of the English people. As all around her

darkened, the mind of the Queen became more and more fanatic, and instead of faltering in her purpose, she only sought to precipitate its accomplishment. She would have removed Elizabeth herself from her path by violent means, but the policy of Philip as a Spanish King interposed to prevent the destruction of the great obstacle to the accession to the throne of England of the betrothed wife of the heir to the Crown of France. So all that was left to Mary of England was to continue with increased and unremitting severity her war of extermination on the other leaders of English Protestantism, and on its most devoted adherents. 'After every allowance,' says the Catholic historian Lingard, 'it will be found that in the space of four years almost two hundred persons perished in the flames for religious opinions; a number at the contemplation of which the mind is struck with horror.' The natural compassion of Mary, which had stayed her hand for some time from proceeding to extremities against Jane Grey and the chiefs of the Dudley-Grey faction, and which displayed itself in other cases, where the interests of religion were not supposed to be concerned, was entirely deadened in her relation with these hateful heretics. Faith and a Church had achieved one more victory over Charity and human nature. For these persecutions to the death Mary seems to be herself responsible, for the instigators and approvers of her detestable course were comparatively obscure men. Neither

Gardiner nor Pole, though they had both lent themselves to the persecution, is personally responsible for the extent to which it was actually carried. The Catholic world viewed the proceeding with aversion, and the Pope himself became a counsellor of moderation. But Mary's zeal for religion overleapt the bounds of ecclesiastical, as well as of civil policy, and ardent defender of the Catholic Church as she was, she still was Tudor enough to assert her authority against papal dictation. The prohibition of the publication of a Papal Bull within England by this champion of Catholicism is the strongest and strangest proof that the pride of a sovereign and the strong-will of a family cannot be suppressed by the most imperative claims of a formal creed.

It is difficult to think of Mary in herself and apart from the fanaticism which absorbed her mind and her heart. Yet it seems evident that she had not the power of subordinating her own impulses to wider considerations of public policy. Not only did she reduce a national government to the character of a branch of the Inquisition, but she allowed England to sink into a secondary power in Europe, in obedience to her personal inclination for Philip and for Spain. No feeling that this humiliation was unintentional on the part of the Queen could save her from a growing unpopularity among the English people. Nor did her domestic politics redeem her reputation. She had succeeded, indeed, to an im-

poverished kingdom, but she entirely failed in recruiting its wasted resources, while lavish in her benefactions and restitutions to her own Church at the national expense. Even her highest acts of statesmanship were unappreciated. Her attempts to foster the interests of commerce were chiefly prospectively advantageous, being dependent on the opening of fresh channels of enterprise, and the merchants felt during her reign only the exactions to which they were subjected. Poverty of the Exchequer and heavy taxes without glory were not a programme likely to conciliate Englishmen, who preferred a Sovereign that could make the kingdom wealthy and great, to one who tried to do right and was very compassionate to the poor. Even the higher morality and decorum of her Court were robbed of their popularity by being associated with stiffness and gloom. Although, except on the great point of religious persecution, her errors were venial compared with those of many of her predecessors, and although she had instincts of right which few of them displayed, Mary seemed to be haunted by continual ill-luck. The secret perhaps lay in this, that, with good intentions and fair abilities, she failed absolutely in one essential of a great Sovereign. She understood nothing of the people over whom she ruled, or of the times in which she was called upon to be a ruler.

ELIZABETH.

THE reputation of Elizabeth Tudor has experienced nearly as many vicissitudes as that of her father, Henry, but the depreciatory estimate appears to be rather in the ascendant at the present time, and there is a disposition to deny to her not merely the moral, but the intellectual superiority which was once looked upon as her especial characteristic. No doubt there has been a great deal of undiscriminating and uninformed panegyric of the Protestant Queen, which has provoked, naturally enough, a strong reaction, as facts have been disinterred, and earlier judgments have been brought to light, which are quite inconsistent with this unqualified praise; but I am disposed to think that this revulsion of opinion is likely to lead to an equally erroneous estimate of her character. If the more favourable view was wanting in distinctness of delineation, that which is becoming popular seems to be wanting in breadth and comprehensiveness; if the former was a mere generalisation of perfections, the latter appears to me to be wanting in a sense of the real significance and

mutual bearing of her specific acts and of the varying phases of her policy.

In her natural character Elizabeth was a true Tudor, but in the manner and degree of the manifestation of the family qualities she differed from both her father and grandfather in so curiously complicated a manner, that it is difficult to say whether we are more assisted or perplexed in the elucidation of her real nature by the alternations of these resemblances and contrasts. There was a coarseness of grain in the mental organisation of all the Tudors, but their physical constitution, as I have already said, exercised a considerable influence on the manner of its development. In Henry the Eighth the strong physique so predominated that it seems to overlay and obscure the natural vigour and subtlety of his mind on ordinary occasions, and it is only on such questions as the divorce from Catharine of Aragon that we recognise the inherent family tendency to casuistry. In Henry the Seventh, on the contrary, the casuistical element predominated, and the coarseness of grain showed itself rather in a passive insensibility to considerations of delicacy and honour, than in any active self-indulgence. Both the Henries had an unusually strong will, but in the son it was too often the master of his actions; in the father it was tempered and disciplined by the restraints and considerations of a more sustained thoughtfulness. In Elizabeth the headstrong

self-will of her father was modified into a feminine wilfulness; while the patient and hesitating thoughtfulness of her grandfather was intensified into a hampering and tormenting irresolution. In mental capacity, however, it seems to me that she excelled both. She had more vigour and elevation of purpose than her grandfather; she had more self-knowledge, and therefore much more self-mastery, than her father. She had deeper insight and a wider range of vision than either of them. Henry the Eighth was the nursling of prosperity. He had the self-confidence and frankness inspired by a comparatively assured position, and both the generosity and the self-indulgent habits which were the natural incidents of an overflowing treasury; he sustained the position of England, but he wasted her resources, and absorbed the national in a personal policy. Henry the Seventh and Elizabeth were both trained in a school of adversity, and both succeeded to a starving exchequer, to an unstable throne, and to a lowered position among the nations of Europe. The former paid his way and accumulated a vast sum of money, laid the foundations of a settled state of society at home, and placed England in a position of equality abroad. Elizabeth also economised, but she did not extort or hoard; for the greater part of her reign the taxation was light, while the Treasury was neither bankrupt nor overflowing. Henry the Seventh never escaped from the influence of his

straitened early days, and, except in the fitting magnificence of his Court, was to the last very close-fisted. Elizabeth could scrape for money with as little regard for decency and dignity as her grandfather, and was nearly as reluctant as he in disbursing her money. Both, in fact, had felt the necessity and appreciated the value and power of money. But in Henry there was an unmixed reluctance to part with it under any circumstances, while in Elizabeth the disinclination seems rather to arise from a doubt as to the possible extent of expenditure to which she was committing herself, and a terror of indefinite drains on a limited exchequer. Where she knew the exact extent, and could estimate the exact significance and efficacy of the payment, she was often even lavish and seemingly heedless, as in her gifts to individuals. By this may be explained what has excited the indignation of later historians, her *largesses* to men of the Leicester or Hatton stamp, as compared with her stint in the crisis of a great national danger, or in the subsidies necessary to the efficiency of an enlarged international policy. She subsidised the former for her own pleasure or peculiar ends; she made them certain benefactions accordingly, and so the matter seemed to end. But when foreign allies or dependents, such as the insurgents of Scotland and the Low Countries, repeatedly asked for money, the *quid pro quo* was often a little doubtful, and the necessity or expediency of the disbursement fair matter for hesitation. Even when the

demand for money seems to us one which was imperative for the welfare or even safety of England, we must remember that it presented itself to the mind of the Queen as one among many similar conflicting claims on her purse, and that possibly what now appears to us inexplicable fatuity on her part may have been the result of a decision (perhaps a mistaken one) arrived at after long and anxious consideration.

But unquestionably there was a dangerous tendency in the mind of Elizabeth to resist anything forced upon her as a necessity, and not proceeding from her own free and spontaneous will. This is a phase of the wilful side of her character. She could not endure being dictated to, in appearance even, by circumstances. She resisted the fatality of events with the energy of a most persistent advocate of the doctrine of free-will. She appeared almost to think that the only means of self-assertion lay in refusing to acknowledge seemingly inevitable conclusions. She declared herself to be naturally very irresolute, but her irresolution did not, I imagine, arise from real self-distrust, so far as this implies the consciousness of the want of intellectual ability (for her self-esteem was nearly as great as that of her father Henry), but from a curious sense of the inadequacy of any human judgment to cope with the possibilities of events, and consequently from an

exaggerated estimate of the importance of the element of uncertainty which there must be in every great problem of action presented to our notice. Hesitation and delay were in her not the tokens of an inability to grasp the conditions of the question, but of a mind which saw only too many possible contingencies, and sought in delay for what a modern poet has finely expressed as the great deficiency in times of political storm, 'the leisure to grow wise.' So far, indeed, was this irresolution from being in Elizabeth a mark of want of self-confidence, that it was fostered to a dangerous extent by this very excess of unconscious self-reliance. Like her great-grandfather, Edward the Fourth, whom she resembled in not a few respects, she often slighted a danger and postponed a remedy or a safe-guard until it was almost too late, from a conviction that, come what might, she should prove herself equal to the occasion. As she said to her last Parliament, 'God had given her a heart that did never fear any enemies,' and she hesitated and deferred to commit herself unreservedly to any course of policy, from feelings depending partly on a strong sense of possibilities which might render that course unnecessary or unwise, and partly on a conviction that she could at any stage retrieve, by her own innate capacity, the consequences of her present hesitation, and so preserve her mastery of the situation.

But although Elizabeth's intellect saw difficulties

in every course, her imagination temptations in every direction, and though her course was often made unsteady and uncertain by counter-currents of prudence, ambition, and wilful caprice, yet, on the whole, and in the end, taking long periods of time and a wide range of policy, she pursued the true course. The very power and subtlety of her mind indeed led her every now and then into grievous blunders, and she often allowed her more ignoble qualities to guide her conduct at the expense of her own peace of mind. But however she might at times shrink back from its realisation, she had a vivid conception of a great, wide, and consistent policy, never entirely lost sight of it, and in the end accomplished it in all material points. She began her rule as the sovereign of a country one-half of whose inhabitants seemed almost bound by the religious tenets which they held to look upon her as illegitimate, and as the representative of a great act of national schism, which in their hearts they deplored and reprobated. She found herself in the European Commonwealth a sort of pariah, tolerated as a matter of policy by rival nations, but in danger every day of a combination against her which would prove fatal to her own Crown, if not to the independence of England. In the northern portion of her own island a Queen reigned whose pretensions to the English Crown were avowed, and supported by much sympathy among Englishmen themselves, as well by the tie of marriage and

the bond of a common religion with the two most powerful Sovereigns of the Continent. Yet in the end she not only secured and consolidated her own throne and baffled every adversary, but even made both France and Spain unwillingly co-operate to this very end, and sorely against their own inclinations remain passive spectators of the downfall of her once formidable Scottish rival. The general result of the struggle in which Elizabeth was engaged from her accession to her death is so evident, that that alone would be sufficient foundation on which to rest her claim to sagacity and consistency in essentials. Her reign was too long, and the circumstances of the time varied too much during this period, for any run of mere luck to be a sufficient interpretation of this success. It was a uniform success, in the end, against all opponents under nearly every conceivable condition under which intellect could be pitted against intellect. And even if we look at shorter periods of time, and confine ourselves more closely to specific questions of policy, the result is in the same direction if not always quite as marked. Historians, who have been displaying considerable critical acumen in demonstrating, under the inspiration of the passing impressions of foreign ambassadors, how thoroughly Elizabeth mismanaged affairs, are compelled again and again in their summary of results to acknowledge that, somehow or other, notwithstanding all this bungling, and this wilful disregard of the dic-

tates of wisdom and honour, the catastrophe of the drama is favourable to the misguided Queen, to a most strange and unexpected extent. It is only when we descend to each separate act, and dwell on the seeming or real vacillations of every hour in the mind of the Queen, that we feel any misgivings as to her intellectual capacity. And it was part of the peculiar temperament of Elizabeth that, however subtle and tortuous might be her policy, she seemed to display every step of it to the critical gaze of interested spectators. Never was there an intriguer who worked so openly in the sight of all men; never was there a dissembler who threw so little appearance of reality over the dissimulation. She cared little, indeed, for giving a passing impression of weakness and irresolution, and she blinded her adversaries quite as much by this candid display of her difficulties as by any more overt act of deception. She even worked out her own fancies of possibilities in the possibility of which she never herself really believed, before the bewildered eyes of the Spaniard and the Frenchman, until at last they knew not what was real and what was delusive, and effectually secured the purposes of Elizabeth by keeping their own Courts in an equal state of uncertain perplexity. She thus played even with her own weaknesses, and made her own irresolution perform the part of a piece of clever diplomacy. Much of her dissimulation may be explained in this manner. She was, as I have

said, a bad actor, for she nearly always overdid her assumed part; but this arose, to a great extent, from her dissimulation itself generally representing some real, though not predominant feature of her own nature. She was in herself so curious a combination of contrary and seemingly quite inconsistent feelings and opinions, that she had only to give for the time the full rein to any one of these, and without being false to part of herself, though she was really false to herself as a whole, she could speak with the earnestness of truth, and left her audience in profound doubt between the impossibility of the fact in the form in which it was presented to them, and the impression of *vraisemblance* in the substance of the statement which her earnestness was, nevertheless, calculated to produce. She was from the first placed in so anomalous a position by her birth and her natural associations, that self-contradiction seemed a necessity of her existence. The most autocratic of natures was tied down by circumstances to become the leader of the great revolt of free thought against authority throughout Europe; a mind most jealous of the rights and most peculiarly alive to the immunities of Sovereigns was compelled to become the instigator, or, at any rate, the countenancer, of rebellion in half the States of Europe, and to give a terrible illustration in her own kingdom of the responsibility of kings to the tribunal of public opinion, if not of justice; one whose tastes and sympathies, as dis-

tinguished from her intellectual convictions, were certainly with the great communion of Rome, was compelled to become its most deadly enemy, and to countenance, if not a system, at any rate the favourers of a system against which her own nature revolted, as a standard of rebellion, and, in its hard Calvinistic type, as an intellectual dictator. Is it surprising, then, that she often hesitated in her path, and often looked back with longing and doubting eyes to the flesh-pots of Egypt, and indulged sometimes in dreams—but only dreams—of an elysium of repose in which Rome should be her guardian angel and Philip of Spain her natural ally? But, in the end, and looking at her course as a whole, she restrained her own political and religious inclinations as effectually as she did her private feelings, when the vision of the clever, courtly, but reckless Leicester, the playmate of her youth, and the assiduous flatterer of her weaker nature, presented itself to her imagination as her future husband.

But there was an advantage for Elizabeth even in the self-contradiction of her nature and her position. If she was divided within herself, she represented all the more faithfully the divided state of opinion and feeling within the nation which she governed. She might and did persecute Puritans, but they felt that much of her intellect and the very existence of her queenly position were bound up with her allegiance to the cause of the Reformation. She might and did

persecute the Roman Catholics as much as her sister Mary had persecuted the Protestants, though her motive was scarcely so much of a religious as of a political character. Yet the Catholics felt in their hearts that Elizabeth liked Protestants little as such, and still less Protestantism as an ecclesiastical system, and that her heart, though not her head, was with the old faith. So that neither Puritans nor Catholics felt themselves entirely cut off from sympathy with their Sovereign, and alike felt that she was not merely the Queen of one section or one faction of her subjects. And this independent position Elizabeth maintained to the last. She had strong sympathies with the elder Cecil on many points; their natures were in some respects similar, but their different positions necessarily made a difference in their mode of looking at public affairs; and Elizabeth, though she listened to and trusted William Cecil as she never listened to or trusted any other man, always preserved her own policy as distinct from his, and however she might allow it to be modified, never permitted it to be superseded by, him. It was her great merit to find out, and to maintain at her side, great and capable men, and not to be unworthily jealous of any intellectual comparison between herself and them. But she never allowed them to become the arbiters of the national policy; this ultimate arbitration she kept in her own hands, and she maintained certain checks to their growing

influence, and often mortified their self-esteem by lavishing, at the same time, even exaggerated marks of favour on a set of rivals wholly inferior to them in ability and character, but at the same time the representatives of feelings and prejudices which had no little hold on a part of the nation; and which were kept in order and satisfied by this specious representation in Court circles. And although Burghley was in the main a sagacious and right-minded statesman, it was well for England that Elizabeth never dropped the reins of power into his hands; for, with all his merits, he was still the head of a party and the representative of fixed ideas; and party spirit was then the great internal danger of England, and a too stereotyped policy almost as great an external disability. It was not Cecil, but Elizabeth, who, by her subtle and delusive policy, held Philip in her leading-strings, until the time had come when he was compelled to make his great effort against her, under circumstances which, if still very encouraging, were infinitely less so than they had been at any epoch since her accession to the English throne.

Of the better known qualities of Elizabeth I have little need to speak in detail. Her personal vanity, —so open as to be more like a curious affectation than a real weakness—with its amusing and characteristic preference of praise for the youth and beauty which she had not, to a just meed of admiration for

the dignity and grace which she really possessed. Her royal bearing, which was so greatly aided by a stately person, a keen, piercing eye, and an aquiline nose in full harmony with her imperial cast of features. Her urbanity to all classes, the spell which she threw over such spirits as Raleigh and Sydney, and the somewhat rough and boisterous greetings with which she encountered the coarser mother-wit and propitiated the good-will of the lower orders. Her woman's nature so complete and so conspicuous in itself, and yet married to a mind so masculine and so sardonic! The Parliamentary records tell how she could manage a House of Commons nearly as easily as an individual Minister, recognising its place in the Constitution, but ruling its insurrectional energies with a skilful alternation of the curb and the loose rein. But, as in her foreign and general policy, the result is the best proof of the judgment and tact of the means employed. What Sovereign, except one of great intellectual ascendancy, could have evoked at the close of so long a reign, from representative men who felt and thought so differently from her on so many delicate points, that outburst of enthusiastic loyalty and grateful confidence which crowned the last session of her last Parliament?

Elizabeth presents a character against which much may be said with justice in particulars, and regarding which, as a whole, the verdict in respect of strict morality can scarcely be a favourable one.

But the main lines of the picture are firm and not unpleasing, and if virtue is to be measured by greatness of intention—if immorality of practice can be palliated in our judgment by the necessities of an almost unparalleled position of perplexity and danger—and if the disposition to good or to evil is measured by the opportunities offered and the temptations deliberately overcome, perhaps it will be considered that few Sovereigns have passed through such an ordeal, under such original disadvantages of education and peculiar disposition, with so little dishonour to themselves, and so much advantage to the country whose interests they were called upon to consult. But it is only through her intellectual greatness that we can understand and appreciate Elizabeth's morality such as it was; and it is only on an intellectual basis, using the term in its widest sense, that her reputation as one of the very greatest of English Sovereigns must, after all, be built up and established.

JAMES THE FIRST.

Every one who attempts to draw a picture of James Stuart must feel a great difficulty in the fact that a master-hand has anticipated him, and that after the remarkable portrait in Sir Walter Scott's 'Fortunes of Nigel,' any sketch by other hands must appear faint and colourless. All that I can do is to place before the reader the salient features of a character of which the popular mind has already a tolerably correct impression.

As to the more prominent and superficial characteristics of James, there can be little fear of going astray, either in the direction of caricature or flattery. These are to be gathered from the pages of nearly every writer of the period, and they are presented in unmistakable features under the hand of the King himself, in his printed works and in his familiar correspondence. All that there can be any hesitation or dispute about is whether certain ambiguous and questionable transactions have or have not a deeper moral significance, and do or do not imply a greater capability for evil. On these points,

however, the evidence we possess is so inadequate and so perplexing, that anyone in forming a decision must rely to a considerable extent on his favourable or unfavourable prepossessions, and it is more prudent to confine oneself to a statement of the difficulty, and to suspend a decided judgment.

James the Sixth of Scotland ascended the throne of England in the thirty-seventh year of his age. His character therefore, whatever it was, might in any case be supposed to have been fully matured, and events had in his case precipitated this development. Anything more unfavourable than the training of early circumstances which he underwent can hardly be imagined. The accredited child of a marriage terminated by a tragedy which has cast a deep stain of suspicion on the memory of one parent; with the taint of possible illegitimacy attaching itself to his own birth; at first the involuntary supplanter and then the successful rival of his own mother, he was from his earliest years placed in a position from which few characters, indeed, could have escaped without serious detriment, and from which his own peculiar character was especially likely to suffer. His sympathies, deprived by the necessities of his position of even the power of expansion afforded by the relations of the family circle, were from the first turned inwards on himself, and the domestic ties which he afterwards formed, as husband and father, implying deference to his superior wisdom and will,

were only such as to exaggerate this egotism of thought and feeling. When he reached years of intelligence, he found himself in the hands of ambitious statesmen and fierce factions, by whom his person was used as an instrument of authority for purposes as to which his own wishes were scarcely ever consulted. While thus he was made to feel the significance and importance of the royal name and authority more and more, and in the downfall of each of his successive masters saw a lesson of the instability of usurped and illegitimate power, he was naturally led to place a disproportionate value on the exercise of his own free-will, and to regard any suspension of this as equivalent to a condition of public instability and anarchy. As time rolled on, opportunities of temporary self-assertion presented themselves more frequently in the rivalries of contending parties, and almost insensibly his personal wishes gained more influence over the course of events. In proportion as the restraints frequently imposed on his authority and will had been unduly severe, so the licence which was every now and then afforded to his prejudices and caprices was dangerously great. Whenever he was at all a free agent, he was so absolutely and without restriction. How he availed himself of these opportunities the records of Scotland during that period tell us too plainly. Afraid of trusting himself to any man of established position or commanding talents, lest he should find in him only another

master, James threw himself into the hands of favourites, who owed all their fortunes to his bounty, and whom on that account he could complacently regard as the creatures of his will, and the mere ministers of his wishes. These men were not worse in character than most of the actors in the events of those days, but they possessed the disqualification of being by the very nature of their position destitute of sympathies with the nation, and mere exponents and agents of a strictly personal policy. By them the King's natural weakness of character was fostered and aggravated, and the petty tyranny which his foolish fondness enabled each in turn to exercise over him was exercised to the advantage not of the nation at large, but of the favourite himself and his personal connections. Meanwhile the great religious movement which had for the first time created a really national life in Scotland suffered in tone and mode of expression from the low and selfish influences with which it was thus brought into contact, and the mantle of John Knox descended on men who imitated his uncompromising and uncourtly bluntness of manner, without maintaining his high purposes and his lofty principle. They could beard and insult the King in his palace and denounce him from the pulpit, but they shared eventually the fate of those who intrude into a sphere of action which lies apart from the centres of their natural strength, and partook of the vicissitudes of Court intrigue, instead of

controlling the currents of popular sentiment. They alienated the mind of the King thoroughly from all sympathy with their religious cause, by associating it with constant antagonism to all that he cherished and desired, and with insolence to his own person. Thus to the other delights of the Promised Land, which his succession to the throne of England offered to James, were added the hope of being able there to gratify his secret but ingrained loathing of Presbyterianism and Presbyterians, and the joy of making the Bishops who governed the Church as he made the ministers who governed the State. Every restraint, indeed, that he suffered from in Scotland increased his desire to attain to the southern elysium, and exaggerated to his imagination the extent of the emancipation from control which he would there secure. The real conditions under which the Tudors had exercised such almost unlimited power, his mind—even had its early discipline been less unfortunate—would never have been capable of grasping, far less of being guided by in his rules of action. He never could have been brought to see that the reason why that astute line of Sovereigns were subjected to so little control from the people whom they governed, was because they had the art and wisdom of so much controlling themselves where national feelings were concerned, and of making themselves the exponents of the national will, instead of setting up any personal policy of their own as its ostentatious anta-

gonist. To the mind of James there was no medium between being browbeaten by insolent nobles and presuming preachers, and being able to indulge to the utmost, without regard to any external circumstances, his own unbridled fancies. *Order* with him was another name for licence in the Ruler, just as *Anarchy* was for licence in the Subject. Had he been capable of interpreting rightly anything that he saw, the minute knowledge of the real state of affairs in England during the latter years of Elizabeth, which his frequent communications with the leading statesmen and aspiring politicians of that kingdom offered to him, ought to have instructed him on this point. But his mind was quite unequal to looking at more than one point at a time, and he almost invariably confined himself to those which were most insignificant and irrelevant. Of the power of combining ideas and forming a just deduction from them he was quite destitute. Little side-channels constantly attracted his notice and excited his curiosity so forcibly, that he exhausted all his shrewdness and the resources of a miscellaneous and ill-digested stock of learning in exploring their byeways and in fathoming the supposed depths of their shallows, while the main stream which led straight to the desired bourne passed by him, though stretched before his eyes, unheeded and unknown. In little things he could be very shrewd, both in word and deed. But his shrewdness instinctively failed him exactly where its

exercise was of most importance. Like most persons who are great in small things, he had an overweening opinion of his own wisdom and sagacity. He seriously believed that he could easily deal with questions which had baffled or perplexed Elizabeth, and command where she had been content to temporise and persuade. He could so little estimate a really great crisis that, instead of feeling any difficulty or doubt as to its solution, he unconsciously lowered its proportions to the standard of his own mind, and felt himself fully master of the situation. His real qualifications, such as they were, served to increase this delusion. He had been crammed with the ponderous learning of the day, and he had the insatiate craving for more food of this description which is felt by those who read without digesting, and acquire a vast stock of knowledge without adding, except in an infinitesimal degree, to the treasures and capacity of their own mind. The wisdom which was scattered through the pages which he perused passed into his mind in the concrete shape of aphorisms and astute generalities, which were ever in his mouth, and might give a superficial impression of a superior understanding. A dry and somewhat sarcastic sense of humour even suggested a still greater penetration. But he had never really mastered the meaning of what he read so as to be able to apply it; it formed no part of his practical rule of conduct, and was as useless for any practical purpose as if he had been a

dunce instead of a pedant. His occasional humorous sayings were, after all, the expression of mere superficial and transient perceptions, and implied no actual insight into the relations of things. The real motive and explanation of his actions generally lay somewhere else—in some rooted prejudice, in some vain self-conceit, in some passing passion, or in a careless good-nature. His faith in his own capacity for government, and his ambition to emulate the great kings whose reputation he admired, and whose axioms were his common-places, joined to an easy, good-natured, and kindly temperament, made him disposed to govern well, and to promote the happiness and prosperity of his people. But this general purpose was proof against no temptation of personal selfishness or idle caprice, and of little practical value in a prince who had no power of looking beyond immediate circumstances, and no capacity of sympathy with anything which did not lie within his own narrow circle of ideas, or which did not, to his limited understanding, palpably concern his own interests. He had learned so long to consider these interests as the centre of everything that was important, that he could not conceive of anything which lay, or seemed to lie, beyond their sphere being worthy of consideration. Neither national sentiment nor the welfare of an individual subject entered into the constituent elements of his decisions, except in the form of a fear to be guarded against, or an adver-

sary to be disarmed. Both his mind and heart were shallow. His anger was violent and unseemly in its manifestation, but quickly evanescent; and his resentments, though they were not easily entirely eradicated, were rather recurring than chronic in their symptoms, and were easily superseded, at least for the time, by passing impressions and incidental feelings. As a rule, he rather cherished a grievance than resented injuries. A few things and a few persons, indeed, he hated with an intenser feeling, almost unaccountable in its disproportionate strength. He detested the use of tobacco, and he hated its great patron, Raleigh—the first theoretically, the second instinctively, from a consciousness of the natural antagonism of such a nature (both in its good and evil points) to his own; but while no amount of reason would have convinced him of error in the former case, his own interests (when he could be made to see them) would be sufficient to disarm for the time his active resentment in the latter case.

If it were not for evidence that James was as unconscious of his physical as he was of his mental deficiencies, one might have been inclined to suppose that he placed an undue value on the little wit he did possess, from a feeling that he could lay claim to no respect on the score of his personal appearance or bodily accomplishments. The son of a very handsome mother, and the accredited son of a handsome father, he resembled neither of them in physical

appearance. Scandal said that his want of good looks and ungainliness were additional proofs of the paternity which it assigned to him. Perhaps the most minute description of his person in later years which is free from satirical *animus* is that given by the Court physician, Sir Theodore Mayerne, in his memorials of his professional attendance on the King. Sir Theodore (as quoted by Sir Henry Ellis) says that his Majesty's legs were slender—scarcely strong enough to carry his body; that his jaw was narrow, and rendered swallowing difficult—a defect which he inherited both from his mother and from his grandfather, King James the Fifth; that in moist weather and winter he had usually a cough; that his skin was soft and delicate, but irritable; that he never ate bread, always fed on roast meat, and seldom or never ate of boiled, unless it was beef; that he was very clumsy in his riding and hunting, and frequently met with accidents; that he slept ill, waked often in the night, and called his chamberlains; nor could sleep be again easily induced, unless some one read to him; that he was passionate, but that his wrath quickly subsided; that he had naturally a good appetite, and a moderately fair digestion; that he was very often thirsty, drank frequently, and mixed his liquors, being very promiscuous in the use of wines. Sir Theodore, however, adds that his head was strong, and never affected by the sea, by drinking wine, or riding in a chariot. Till 1613 he had never

taken medicine, and, like his predecessor, was always averse to it. Towards the close of his life the King suffered under a complication of disorders, stone, gout, and gravel. Sir Theodore dwells particularly on the grief of James for the deaths of Prince Henry and the Queen; the latter was followed by a severe illness at Royston. Another friendly writer, Fuller, says that (after his accession to the English throne) 'his Scotch tone he rather affected than declined, and though his speaking spoiled his speech in some English ears, yet the masculine worth of his set orations commanded reverence, if not admiration, in all judicious hearers; but in common speaking, as in his hunting, he stood not upon the clearest, but the nearest way. He would never go about to make any expressions.' Unfriendly writers give little more than a malicious amplification of the above particulars, We learn from them that the King was of middle stature, moderately corpulent; his eyes large and always rolling, and his beard thin—his tongue so much too large for his mouth that he drank in an unseemly manner. His legs were weak, and his walk circular. This weakness caused him to lean on other men's shoulders, and was the source of the unseemly lolling on his favourites which was so much remarked. He was constant in his apparel, usually dressing in the same fashion, and delighting to wear his clothes till they came to rags. His doublet was quilted for stiletto-proof. His dress is

described as of bright green. He never washed his hands, but only rubbed his fingers slightly with the wetted end of a napkin. That he was a great drinker of wine we have seen already on indisputable evidence; whether he was often overcome by it is a matter of doubt. The physician's account proves that he was not intoxicated easily, but we know from distinct evidence that he was certainly so occasionally. Other accounts tell us that he took very little at a time, but that the wine was very strong, and that he took it very frequently; so that probably, without being often visibly overcome by it, he was always to some extent under its influence; and in his later years, when he often suffered from acute pain, he drank more copiously at a time, and the effects were more evident.

But if nature had given James an unprepossessing personal appearance and an ungraceful carriage, he increased the effects of both by his careless and unbecoming habits. If his person had little in it to inspire reverence, by his demeanour he often produced a more active feeling of disgust and contempt. The reports of the French ambassadors at the English Court are to be received, no doubt, with caution, since James was regarded by them as an enemy, in consequence of his Spanish leanings but they record certain phases of character which are so much in harmony with the impression left by nearly all contemporary accounts, and by James's own corre-

spondence, that they can hardly be very far from the actual truth. 'When he wishes to assume the language of a king,' they observe, 'his tone is that of a tyrant; and when he condescends, he is vulgar.' And again, they tell us that the King 'was yesterday a little disturbed by the populace, which ran together from all sides to see him. He fell into such anger upon this, that I was quite unable to appease him; he cursed every one he met, and swore that if they would not let him follow the chase at his pleasure he would leave England—words of passion which meant no harm, but calculated to draw upon him great contempt and inextinguishable hate from the people.' By thus neglecting so simple a means of obtaining popularity as a little courtesy and affability on a chance occasion such as this, James threw away wantonly one of the great props of the power of his predecessor, and reduced himself for the support of his administration to the bare theory of monarchy, stretched in an ostentatious manner to its utmost extent. No theory, however good, could stand so perpetual an appeal to its unsupported authority. Instead of accepting the constitution of England as he found it established, and making it, as Elizabeth had done, the instrument of his own purposes by always displaying sympathy with the predominant and most cherished feelings of the nation, James fretted under its restraints, and was always trying in some manner more or less direct to remove its safeguards and

undermine its foundations. 'The King of Spain,' he observed bitterly to Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador, has more kingdoms and subjects than I have, but there is one thing in which I surpass him. He has not so large a Parliament. The Cortes of Castile are composed of little more than thirty persons. In my kingdom there are nearly five hundred. The House of Commons is a body without a head. The members give their opinions in a disorderly manner. At their meetings nothing is heard but cries, shouts, and confusion. I am surprised that my ancestors should ever have permitted such an institution to come into existence. I am a stranger, and I found it here when I came, so I am obliged to put up with what I cannot get rid of.' Such being the spirit in which James regarded his Parliament, it can hardly be wondered at that the disagreements between them were frequent and serious. But so far from merely *putting up* with what he found, James, after attempting to encroach on the privileges of that assembly, found it necessary not only to recede, but to make greater concessions than Elizabeth had ever made, without gaining any of the credit for the act which she obtained. For he always yielded too late, and when all the grace of concession was over.

There was one feature in the character of James which was the source of much of his conduct. He was by nature more than timid, he was an abject coward, and nothing but some imminent fear in

another direction could rouse him to anything manly either in thought or action. The terrors of the night in which David Rizzio was murdered are supposed to have had something to do with this temperament, and James seems to be entitled quite as much to our compassion as to our contempt for this characteristic. It also was not without a certain beneficial effect in one respect on the mind of the English Nation, though it had a tendency to demoralise it in other ways. The enterprises of Elizabeth's sailors against the Spaniards in the West Indies, while they had materially assisted in raising the national reputation, and breaking down the power of Spain, had engendered a buccaneering and freebooting spirit in Englishmen of all classes, which, if left unchecked, might have materially lowered ere long the whole national character. The cowardice of James put a check to this, though at the expense of the national reputation and the national honour, and when the opportunity of action was again offered to the sailors of England, they made their expeditions under the influence of other and higher feelings, and the gallant semi-pirates Drake and Raleigh were succeeded by the equally gallant but high-souled and religious Blake. James, from the very fear of fighting, was a peacemaker by nature, and whatever religious principle he had, developed itself in nearly the only Christian maxim which he attempted to realise practically, 'Blessed are the peacemakers!' Yet, in his hands, this

maxim became a cover for all sorts of base and imbecile proceedings. Of course, he was not capable of grasping the real meaning of the sentiment, and consequently, while he every now and then violated both its letter and spirit by useless and faint-hearted demonstrations of physical force, he preserved the letter and violated the spirit in a wanton abandonment of his duties as a King of England and a Prince of Europe. There may be differences of opinion at the present day as to the wisdom or impolicy of an armed intervention by England at that epoch in the affairs of the Continent—though the mere instinct of self-preservation appeared to demand it; but there can be none as to the shifty, vacillating course which James actually pursued. The victories of Gustavus Adolphus and the Revolution in England which placed Cromwell at the head of affairs, saved us from much of the danger to which, humanly speaking, England had exposed herself from the great Catholic league, by the inaction and ill-directed action of James, and so have to a great degree cloaked his misconduct; but even the most uncompromising advocates of a strictly pacific non-intervention and of patriotism in its narrowest sense, will shrink from committing themselves to praise of the policy of the Stuart King, which, pacific in name, was in fact a series of unnecessary humiliations.

But, in truth, the motives of the action and inaction of James in this matter, though instigated and

fostered by a love of peace, were not merely pacific. The country with which it was the wish of Englishmen, and to them, at any rate, seemed to be their duty, to go to war, was the representative of a principle of absolute power in kings, which had a charm for the imagination of James that largely increased his disinclination to become the enemy of its assertor. His elysium of autocracy was now transferred from London to Madrid, and the representatives of the system of popular anarchy were now, to his mind, the United Provinces of Holland and the Palatine-King of Bohemia, whose cause he was asked to espouse. The only disturbing forces to this bias in favour of Spain and this antagonism to Continental Protestantism were the terrors of gunpowder plots at home, a royal jealousy of Papal supremacy, and a hankering after the flattering position of the acknowledged head of the Protestant interest in Europe. And it is by the alternate ascendancy of these conflicting sentiments, joined to an occasional dread of the indignation of his own people, that the vacillating and tortuous course of James's foreign policy is mainly to be explained. Any other acts of his in this department which may seem inexplicable are probably to be referred to the fussy restlessness of his nature, which made him a busybody, though it could not nerve him to serious or decided action.

The poverty of his exchequer, to which his policy of abstinence from war has been sometimes speciously

attributed, can hardly be its true explanation. James always found money to spend on Court festivities and pleasures, and to lavish on his extravagant favourites; and one great reason of his being unable to procure more money from his Parliaments was the fact, that he wasted on such objects that which had been already bestowed on him, instead of employing it for the furtherance of a great national policy. In the cause of the Palatine, at any rate, if not in that of their commercial rivals, the Dutch Provinces, the purse-strings of the English people would have been willingly undrawn. I come then to, what must be my last point, the relations between James and his Favourites, and the questionable deaths of Prince Henry and Sir Thomas Overbury. In the case of any one less foolish than James, I must confess that I should be inclined, from the evidence we possess, to draw the most unfavourable inferences as to the nature of the unseemly familiarity which existed between this king and Carr and Villiers. But James had so little idea of dignity and decency of deportment, and was so gross and prurient in his imagination, as distinguished from immorality in act, that I hesitate to decide against him, and even incline to the belief that he was innocent of the deeper charge. As to the death of Prince Henry, if it were not a natural one,—on which point I do not think our evidence enables us to pronounce an absolute opinion, though it seems rather to preponderate against the

poisoning theory—I do not believe that James at the worst can be accused of anything more than perhaps a guilty knowledge or suspicion that something against the life of the Prince had been contemplated, probably in that case by some one who was too dear to him, or too much in his secrets, for him to overcome a cowardly disinclination to interfere. Even this is very doubtful, and nothing but the prying character and strange conduct of James himself would justify me in saying as much as this, even in the case of so suspicious a death. Of the Overbury business I can speak still less decidedly, for it is enveloped in the most perplexing obscurity. It seems to me almost impossible to read the letters of James to the Lieutenant of the Tower, when Somerset gave vent to some threat of what he would do if he were brought to his trial for the murder, without the gravest suspicion that James had some guilty knowledge, if not actual connivance in the affair. No mere political secret seems to be an adequate explanation of his evident terror and consternation. It was clearly something strictly personal in its imputation, the disclosure of which the King so fearfully dreaded; and there is unfortunately nothing in James's private character to place an absolute negative on the unfavourable solution I have hinted at, though there is not anything to make the presumption overpowering.

Such, in the main features of his character, appears

to me to have been James Stuart, one of the weakest, though perhaps not the most worthless, of the Kings who had reigned in England since the days of Henry the Third. Knowing just too much and thinking just too much to be a passive spectator of events, but with far too little either of real knowledge or thoughtfulness to be fit for the direction of any great affair, self-conceited rather than self-confident or self-reliant, a philosopher and a Christian in theory, and a fool and an unscrupulous man in practice, he probably did as little good, though perhaps also as little evil, as any man with such stagnant good intentions and such active inclinations.

CHARLES THE FIRST.

THE character of Charles Stuart is still the subject of warm controversy, and there is little probability of public opinion becoming unanimous on the question, for his life is not merely the story of the career of an individual sovereign, but the record of a great national struggle, and of the most important era in the civil history of England. Hence, although comparatively few persons are now to be found who will commit themselves to an unreserved panegyric of Charles, there is still so large an amount of sympathy in certain classes of society with the political and religious tendencies which he is supposed to represent, and of dislike to the persons or principles of those by whom he was opposed, as to create a disposition to regard all his actions from a favourable point of view, and to extenuate, if not defend, his most questionable proceedings. Independently, too, of these prepossessions, there is something in the character of Charles, and in the real facts of the case, to mislead a superficial observer, and at first to lend a certain plausibility to the attractive picture of him which the softening influences of time and the imaginations

of his sympathisers have substituted for the real man. Every one is acquainted with the conception of him which is still perhaps the prevalent one in the majority of English drawing-rooms, as a stately English gentleman of the most refined tastes and habits, of highly cultivated mind, deep religious feelings, and the purest morals, who unfortunately entertained—or rather was educated into—notions of absolute authority, which were inconsistent with the predominant spirit of the age, though justified by precedents, and who, after making every concession consistent with right to the exorbitant demands of his rebellious subjects, resisted them by arms in strict self-defence, and more than expiated any errors he had committed in his lifetime by his heroic and saintly bearing on the scaffold. Yet such a representation, in my opinion, can be supported only by the widest deductions from the most imperfect premisses, by a total disregard of all but a few isolated facts, and a violation of all the sequences and natural relations of events. Very different will be the result if, abandoning all vague generalities, we study the man in the realities of his actual life, and allow these to speak for themselves, as we should do in estimating the character and motives of other men. At the same time, the truer portrait may explain the origin of the highly-coloured party tradition.

The best plea in extenuation of any faults in the character of Charles is, that he was the son of such a

man as we have seen James Stuart to have been, and that he was brought up under such influences as would spring from the character of his father, and the *morale* of such a Court and such an administration of affairs. Charles could not have escaped altogether from the contagion of such an atmosphere, unless he had himself possessed a temperament which acted as a natural antidote to the poison, or unless his moral organisation was of so high an order as to enable him to perceive and deliberately eschew the evil influences to which he was exposed. From this point of view, then, while proper allowance must be made for the evil in the character or conduct of Charles which can be identified as hereditary, or the result of early training and early associations, we must also discriminate, in arriving at a conclusion as to his moral calibre, between that absence of evil in him which was the result of an immunity from temptation and due to his natural temperament, and that which sprang from his conscious preference of good to evil, where that natural temperament gave a dangerous incentive to pursue the wrong path. Nor, while we lay proper stress on the impressions as to his rights and duties which he may have derived from early tuition, must we forget to note any facts which may show that he had become alive to the erroneousness of these early lessons soon enough to have saved him from evil consequences if he had only been self-consistent in his subsequent career. Looked

at in this manner, what do we find to be the leading facts bearing on the character and moral responsibility of Charles?

He was the son of a man of gross temperament, who, if not from that cause actually very profligate, was flagrantly indecorous in his habits, and the diffusive centre of licentiousness in court and country. But the natural temperament of Charles was of a finer grain, and although he had no such active antipathy to debauchery as to prevent him from adopting an unscrupulous debauchee as his only bosom friend, and though he had become habituated to and tolerant of an amount of grossness and immorality in his daily associations that would surprise some of his modern admirers, and shocked the nice susceptibilities of some of the more pure-minded among his contemporary partisans—he was himself generally cleanly and decorous in his personal habits, and compared with his father and his father's courtiers, and many of his own, moral in conduct and refined in tastes. That he was personally not entirely untainted on this point by the associations of his early life is demonstrable, but while this is not to be dwelt upon as an index of his real character, only a modified praise can be bestowed on his superiority to James in decorum of life. His morality in this respect was too passive to be estimated as a great virtue, and affords no evidence of higher perceptions of moral purity. A formal decorousness of

demeanour was in harmony with his natural coldness of temperament and reserve, and threw around the person of Charles a halo of respectability which would not have attached to him had his nature been more emotional. An overruling sense of duty seems scarcely more strongly marked in such a morality, than it is in the general acceptance of the moral rules of any church or creed. In this restricted sense Charles may have striven to live morally, and, as far as this implies merit, he is entitled to it. There was, however, another feature in his demeanour, which the popular mind has instinctively perceived, and on which the idea of his superiority is mainly based. This is the æsthetic one. By nature Charles was an artist, as well as in fact a connoisseur and patron of art. His ill-health as a boy, the weakness of his limbs at that period, and his imperfection of speech had suggested the cultivation of a naturally fine eye, as an important resource, and a certain external refinement of manner had been the result, which would have been sufficient in itself to make a marked distinction between him and his father James. The dignity of bearing in Charles, which owed so much to this æsthetic cause, and which was sustained by a profound sense of self-importance and superiority, was, it is true, too often replaced and travestied by a frigid haughtiness, and was sometimes lost altogether in moments of great irritation and when this self-conceit was strongly outraged; but at

other times it might be easily mistaken for that true courtesy which arises from a constant sense of what is due to the position and feelings of others as well as to a man's own. But of this essential characteristic of a really high-bred gentleman, Charles was destitute, and although we must attribute his deficiency in a great measure to the unfortunate influence and example of his father, and cannot therefore in justice allow it to weigh much in the scale in our general moral estimate of him, it is a fact, nevertheless, which must materially affect our sympathy with his character as a whole.[1]

There was another refining influence to which the character of Charles was subjected in early years, which might have been also an elevating one of no common kind. The same physical weakness which had led him to his art-studies had made him—in this case, no doubt, with the strong encouragement of his father—a diligent and earnest reader of books. His deeper studies of dogmatic and scholastic theology were relieved by the literature of the poets and dramatists; and had the wise lessons to be derived from the pages of Shakspeare made as much impression on the mind of Charles as did, unfortunately, the divinity schoolmen and the casuists of the then recently risen advocates of right-divine in Church

[1] Miss Austen, in her very effective tale, 'Persuasion,' appears to me to preserve in Sir Walter Elliot some idea of what King Charles's *gentlemanly* stamp really was.'

and King, we might have counted his early ill-health as a piece of real good-fortune for the country which he was to govern. Unfortunately, when his increasing bodily strength enabled him to aspire to the physical accomplishments suitable to his age and position, he had acquired the taste for, and was submitting his mind to, the guidance of far less healthy teachers than the great master-spirit of English literature. Charles had not been born to the position of heir to the Crown; in his childhood he had been to some extent slighted, and he did not become a person of real importance in the State until the death of his elder brother Henry, when he himself was twelve years of age. But he had already learnt some of those lessons of self-importance and of superiority to ordinary considerations, which the literary productions of his own father, as well as the teaching of the Churchmen to whose tuition James had confided him, were constant in inculcating; and these lessons perhaps gained an additional relish from the memories of his own early insignificance. His mind had been prepared for the application of these lessons by that early necessity of living very much in himself, which had fostered the natural reserve of his disposition, and made him still more self-centred. Thus disposed, he would learn from his tutors, and the books to which they directed him, to look upon government as an absolute function of the Sovereign, quite as independent of the will of

the governed as the mass performed by the priest at the altar is of the personal participation of the worshippers in whose presence and for whose benefit it is performed. And however plainly the facts of the case were forced on his attention when he descended into the arena of practical politics, and however often in his personal acts and under peculiar circumstances Charles may have seemed to recognise facts as such, his mind never really recognised them, but recurred to those studies of early life in which theory stood for fact, in which facts were ignored, and in which truth and falsehood had a distinctive significance not with reference to the duties and obligations of real life, but to a standard of conscience to which those duties were entirely subordinated, and by which they were taken into account only so far as they did not contravene the conclusions and objects of one narrow school of thought. This casuistical way of looking at things was peculiarly dangerous in the case of a man so reserved by nature as Charles. Originally perhaps this reserve was little more than the strong reluctance to express his views, felt by one who had a difficulty in speaking, and was conscious of being in a secondary position in the estimation of his auditors. But as he grew up, there can be no doubt that the reserve was caused much less by self-diffidence than by self-conceit; much less by the fear of falling short of the intellectual standard of those with whom he

associated, than by a profound belief that his own wisdom was so complete already that it could gain nothing from being brought into contact with the opinions of other men. From concealing his own real thoughts, the step was an easy one to deceiving others by giving utterance to sentiments which were absolutely untrue as expressions of his real opinions. The overt act of a lie seemed frequently the best method of incommunicativeness, and the lying of Charles differed in this essential point from that of Elizabeth, that it did not represent any occasional or partial sentiment of his mind, but was entirely external to his whole nature, and was justified probably to his conscience by the casuistical argument that its perpetration was an essential agency in a policy which, as a whole, represented his real views, and, indeed, to his eyes the cause of truth.

The barrier of truth once overleapt, there was not sufficient depth in the moral consciousness of Charles to enable him ever to recover the distinction between right and wrong on this point. For though his mind was much more firmly knit (if I may use the expression) than that of his father, and though his purposes and his processes of reasoning were much more deliberate and sustained, and his whole nature, so to say, more uniform than was that of James, his intellect was neither comprehensive nor deep. He adopted a course of conduct more advisedly and

pursued it more steadily, but he was quite as incapable as James of perceiving its necessary issues, or of estimating its bearings on other issues and on the general relations of affairs. He was as little master of the situation, and quite as much at the mercy of his own ill-conceived ideas as James, though so different in his mode of action. If James was carried about by every passing caprice or disturbing circumstance, and realised nothing sufficiently to care to persevere in any course long together, Charles became almost as inconstant and tortuous in his actions, from the mere fact of being unable to perceive the fundamental and fatal discrepancy between his general purpose and the strokes of policy into which the dictates of a self-satisfied but shallow nature were constantly seducing him. Thus, when blinded by mortified pride, and carried away by the artfully insinuated influence of Villiers, he was seeking to revenge himself on the Spanish Court, after his inglorious return from his marriage expedition, he did not see the dangerous antagonism between the policy of popularity-hunting, which he pursued in the middle of the year 1624, and the spirit in which he had written in the November of 1621 to his favourite adviser respecting the popular leaders in Parliament,—'I could wish that the King would send down a commission here that (if need were) such seditious fellows might be made an example to others,'—and had laid claim to this

piece of advice distinctively 'as of my adding.' Nor, again, was he able to perceive the equally dangerous discontinuity between this popular course which he had so vehemently and recklessly pursued at the close of his father's reign, and down to the very day of his own accession, and the autocratic reserve and one-sided conception of the obligations between himself and his people which he adopted immediately after this latter event. And, as we have seen, there was no true standard of right or wrong in his mind to rectify this grave error.

The same inability to preserve in his mind the idea of the essentials of his real and ultimate object, joined to an infatuated belief in his own power of complicated diplomacy, led to the contradictory proposals and projects which he entertained simultaneously during the progress of the great civil struggle in which he involved himself. The action of Charles alternated between simple and direct opposition to the national sentiment, and a multiplicity of cunningly devised expedients to obtain the same ends through hidden and tortuous channels. Most of these expedients were plausible and feasible in themselves, but to play with them all at the same time, and to manipulate them so as to secure his own ends out of their contrariety, required the genius of a Richelieu, which Charles in the blindness of his self-esteem believed himself really to possess. Of the moral obliquity of such a course in reference to

his duties to individuals and to the nation. Charles was absolutely insensible, and he never imagined that those he trifled with or betrayed would see it in that light. Nor had he the saving quality which had prevented his father, to whom he was superior in mental power, from incurring all the ill-effects of his ill-advised actions. James had a natural shrewdness, which was with him an instinct rather than real wisdom, but which often served the purpose of the latter. But shrewdness Charles had none. James firmly believed in the absolute wisdom of his plans, but when the crisis came he gave them up on the appearance of danger (though not in time to save his dignity), as if no such faith in them had ever existed. Charles' faith in himself was more enduring, and perhaps never really failed him till that terrible moment when President Bradshaw rose to pronounce the sentence of the High Court of Justice, and when in broken and agitated sentences he first recognised the hopelessness of his policy and the reality of his danger. Closely connected in its origin with this overweening self-confidence, was the sanguine temperament of Charles. This reasserted itself on the smallest encouragement, and on the most unsubstantial grounds. The faintest gleam of prosperity, the first indications of success in any favourite scheme of policy seemed to upset the balance of his mind, and to excite him to the wildest flights of imagination. Every obstacle disappeared, every

possibility became a certainty in his eyes, and he was wholly unable to conceal the existence of this delusion from the observation of those whom it would have been most desirable to keep in the dark. Under its influence the most substantial bases of his policy were cast aside as of secondary importance, and the work of years was undone in a moment. His demeanour assimilated itself to these false hopes, and the arrogant insolence of his nature displayed itself in its most offensive form. In fact, the manners of Charles could as little bear the test of prosperity, whether real or imaginary, as could his character. He was never so undignified, or showed himself to so little advantage, as when he thought himself in an assured position, and as independent of events as irresponsible to public opinion. Adversity, on the contrary, which destroys the *morale* of many men, or, at any rate, impairs their self-respect, and is fatal to the ease and dignity of their bearing, exhibited Charles in the most favourable light. Reduced to complete inaction by inexorable necessity, he was saved from the consequences of his own ill-advised action. His self-confidence, which in prosperity assumed such an unamiable and unattractive form, exhibited, under these altered circumstances, all the aspect of dignified self-respect. His proud nature fell back upon itself, and the 'wise passiveness' thus imposed upon him, became his greatest strength, and has proved the best foundation for his reputation

in the eyes of posterity. The more complete the restraint—the more hopeless his prospects—the more helpless his 'gray discrowned head,' the nobler became his bearing—the brighter grew his fame; until at last, on 'that memorable scene' at Whitehall, when every earthly hope had vanished, and all possibility of weak or unworthy plotting had ceased, he was more completely royal in his demeanour, and more worthy of our respect than at any other epoch of his life. At that moment he dropped the cloak of a constitutional king which he had hitherto affected to wear, and died with a steady eye, and unfaltering tongue, asserting his real creed that 'a share in government' is 'nothing pertaining' to the People.

Notwithstanding his early physical debility, Charles enjoyed many advantages of circumstance over his father. James was always, to a considerable extent, a foreigner in England, with habits and modes of thought formed in a very different state of society from that with which he was brought into contact on his accession to the throne of England. Charles, though not actually born in England, came to this country at so early an age that he was educated in English associations, and might be expected to imbibe a considerable amount of English sympathies, if not of English prejudices. There was also something in common between the serious tone of his mind and the growing sentiment of the age. Beyond the circle of courtiers and favourites in

which James lived, the spirit of the nation was becoming every year more earnest and more practical in its apprehension of great principles and religious convictions. That age of idealism was passing away, where Sydney and Raleigh and Devereux and Bacon lived at the same time in two worlds,—one of romantic perfection, in imagining which they indulged their highest aspirations, and satisfied the cravings of their deepest moral nature—the other, external and common-place, in which they were content to live the life and share the morals of the men around them. The seventeenth century sought to amalgamate these worlds of thought and action, and to bring forth the morality of the closet into the walks of daily life. The nature of Charles was grave and thoughtful, he had fixed ideas on religion and politics, and he was bent, however imperfect and ill-assorted were the methods he pursued, on realising those ideas, and on bringing the national temperament into conformity with them. But to become the director and leader of a great national sentiment requires more than the possession of a handsome face, a grave and decorous bearing, and fair abilities. It demands qualifications in which Charles was utterly wanting,—honesty of nature as well as honesty of action, magnanimous self-command, unselfishness in at least an intellectual point of view, and elevation of spirit. But Charles's mind was essentially warped from truthfulness; he could rouse no faith and command no confidence in

others, because he had no true principle of truth in himself. He had no scruple in deceiving others, because he recognised no reciprocal obligations between himself and other men. However he might disguise it from himself, duty was with him one-sided only. Nor had he any magnanimity. He could never forgive a supposed injury, and often he could not suppress his continued sense of it, when it was most important to his interests so to do. His temper was far from being an even one, but, in accordance with his nature, it was rather irritable than passionate; and to those whom he disliked, or with whom he was for the moment annoyed, his language and bearing were insolent rather than violent. By untimely exhibitions of this irritable insolence he sometimes marred the effects of a carefully planned system of dissimulation, and effaced the memory of all his previous insinuating graciousness. Thus his dissimulation failed him exactly when it would have served the part of a real virtue, and he reaped all the discredit of resorting to it without any of the fruits. He was thoroughly selfish in feeling and in act, and his selfishness never assumed the shape of more than a personal policy. He clung to Villiers alone with faithfulness, because Villiers represented exclusively his supposed personal interests, and thoroughly identified himself with the personal prejudices of his master. But he distrusted and disliked men like Wentworth, who had a real national

policy, in which the King was indeed to be made the actuating and absolute mover, but in which the King had to conform himself and his personal caprices to this national policy. He adhered to Anglicanism as a branch of his own personal judgment, and from a profound sense of the necessary connection between its existence and his own personal power. But when the opportunity seemed to offer itself of raising a new Civil War in his own interests, he had no scruple in abandoning the Church of England (no doubt only temporarily in his own mind) to the demands of the Scotch Presbyterians, and by so doing destroyed all the moral weight which might have attached to his previous dogged refusals to grant any concession on this point, when concession would have placed him again on the throne of his ancestors. Where his own selfish interest seemed to him to be in conflict with the position or safety of anyone, he sacrificed that person, if unwillingly, at any rate with a baseness of spirit which, in a man who was physically courageous, betrays an inherent lowness of nature. Fortunately for England, he could never be long served successfully by really able men, for if they succeeded so far as to gain an independent reputation, the King, in his short-sighted and poor-spirited jealousy, was never easy till he had mortified them in the eyes of the world and paralysed their action, though at the expense of his own most important ends. Men of principle abandoned from

time to time the cause of his opponents, and from various motives tendered him their services; but in proportion as they were men of principle, their influence over his practical counsels was weak and uncertain, for they had avowed allegiance to a principle, and not to a King. A few good and true-hearted men clung to him to the last, and believed in him, in the enthusiasm of their loyal devotion to the person of a King, and towards these men Charles was as true and as generous in spirit as it was compatible with his nature to be to anyone, for from their unreserved devotion to him personally, they were in his eyes part of himself. But he scrupled not to sacrifice and dishonour such a true servant as the Marquis of Ormond in his disgraceful intrigue with the Irish Catholics through the Earl of Glamorgan—for Ormond's steady adherence to the principles professed but in practice abandoned by the King himself, was a standing reproach to Charles. In such a case, in fact, individuals went for nothing in the eyes of Charles. He himself, in his immediate policy, was everything.

Charles was a faithful and uxorious husband to a self-willed and unfeeling wife, who had the religion and morals of a French woman of rank of the Fronde period. But he asserted his independence occasionally by refusing to follow her advice exactly where and when it would have been beneficial to his interests to have complied. He never commanded her re-

spect, and very seldom her sympathies, and she soon found consolation for the little grief or remorse she may have felt for his death in a private marriage with a recognised lover. As a father, the conduct of Charles was irreproachable, and here it is that the sympathies of Englishmen gather most warmly and most justifiably around him. Here the ice of his character gave way, and his strongest opponents were moved and staggered in their belief in his falseness by the natural emotion he displayed in his interviews with his unfortunate younger children. Nor can the charge of deliberate cruelty sometimes preferred against him be sustained, except in a few cases of personal vengeance. If he erred on this point, it was in indifference to sufferings caused indirectly through his conduct. Yet by his conduct he inflicted miseries on England which bade fair to demoralise an entire generation. He was trained in a bad school, but he cannot escape on the most charitable psychological interpretation of his conduct from a large amount of personal moral responsibility for conscious and deliberate evil-doing under the influence of an unscruplous and selfish ambition. Yet, after all, it is the absence of generous feelings and noble motives which lowers the stamp of the character of Charles the First below that of many Sovereigns who have actually done far worse things, and which makes the historical student, in proportion as his studies are deep and long-continued, turn away from the contemplation of him

with sentiments of increasing aversion, and feel an increasing conviction that, whatever judgment we may pass on the men who condemned him to die the death of a Traitor to the People of England, they had at least this fact to justify them in their verdict, that Charles had really been a traitor to some of the most solemn trusts for which man is responsible, had shown himself to be false and faithless in nearly every public relation, and had forfeited all claim to be called a good man, while he must unhesitatingly be adjudged a weak and bad King.

OLIVER, LORD PROTECTOR.

I OFFER no apology for preferring fact to pedantic prejudice, and inserting the name of the Lord Protector, Oliver, among the Sovereigns of England, though he did not bear the *title* of *King*, and reached the supreme government of this country by a very different process from the ordinary rule of hereditary succession.

Great as have been the diversities in the moral estimates of Oliver Cromwell put forth from time to time by authors of standard authority, and by orators of established reputation, the national sentiment has never quite acquiesced in the reprobation which has been the predominant feature of these moral judgments, but has insisted on retaining, notwithstanding all that was alleged against him on other grounds, a more or less covert admiration for him as one who raised England to a high position among the nations of Europe. The memory of this achievement, revived and strengthened by the ignominious events of the period succeeding the Restoration of the Stuarts, has stood the reputation of

Oliver in good stead against the calumnies of a period of triumphant reaction, and has almost proved a match, in its purely traditionary form, for the worst depreciations of party prejudice and ecclesiastical rancour. Wherever the sentimental conception of the character of Charles the First has not been paramount, there has always been a certain sympathy for his most determined opponent; but it was not till the present century that anything like a critical attempt was made to ascertain the real character of the man whose reputation had, up to that time, been a strange mixture of traditionary respect and profound horror. Much still remains to be done, so far as concerns explanatory details, but the broad features of the character can now be traced with tolerable certainty, and the theories which are irreconcilable with established facts can now be indicated with some assurance.

'I called not myself to this place,' Oliver declared to his first Parliament; 'I say again, I called not myself to this place! of that God is witness; and I have many witnesses who, I do believe, could lay down their lives bearing witness to the truth of that,—namely, that I called not myself to this place. And being in it, I bear not witness to myself, but God and the people of these nations have also borne testimony to it. If my calling be from God, and my testimony from the people, God and the people shall take it from me, else I will not part with it. I

should be false to the trust that God hath placed in me, and to the interest of the people of these Nations if I did.' With this emphatic declaration he prefaces a brief but interesting statement, in his impressive though unpremeditated and inartistic style of speaking, full of earnest and solemn appeals to the corroborative knowledge of many of his hearers, and of an omniscient God, as to the successive steps by which he had risen to the position of Protector, in vindication of the motives of his actions, and the basis of his authority. According to the truth or falsehood of this declaration, then, and to his own actual belief in its truth, the character of the Protector must in a great measure stand or fall, and our decision between the conflicting reputations of him as an ambitious and designing hypocrite and a true-hearted and honest man must be really determined. I shall therefore carefully keep this expository statement in mind in this attempt to analyse the man from whose lips it proceeded.

Oliver Cromwell, as is now well known, was the son of a gentleman living in the quiet little town of Huntingdon, and who was the younger son of the head of a county family of considerable landed possessions, obtained from the favour of Henry the Eighth. Whether Oliver's father added to a moderate income by the proceeds of a brewing business in Huntingdon is more than doubtful, but in any case he not only took a leading part in the municipal affairs

of the town, but lived close to the principal seat of his family, and was on friendly terms with his elder brother. All the connections, collaterally or by marriage, of Oliver's family, were also with county and landed families, so that he is fully justified in the first words of his statement just referred to,—'I was by birth a gentleman, living neither in any considerable height, nor yet in obscurity.' The life and daily influences of a small borough, then, modified and supplemented by close connection and frequent association with the life of landed proprietors, constituted the social atmosphere in which the character of Oliver was developed during his earlier years. Such a combination of social influences would tend in any case towards breadth of social vision, and immunity from the narrower prejudices of both country and town. From the first his station rested on the two principal bases on which English society is built up, and he was thus naturally qualified, should his capacity be equal to his opportunities, to become an interpreter of each of these classes to the other, and the intelligent moderator and ruler of both. The education of a borough grammar-school was supplemented, in his case, by the collegiate and probably the legal studies of a member of the gentry class. He went to school with the future corporation and townsmen of Huntingdon, he mixed at Cambridge with the future landed proprietors and legislators of all England, and in London came into contact with

the living heart of the age. When he returned to his native town, and settled down there in the character of a young husband and householder, his social and civic training was already a more than usually complete one, and he soon afterwards fell under a religious influence still more powerful and significant. At what period exactly his character was first affected in this direction we have no means of ascertaining. The stories which have long been inserted in ordinary biographies respecting his early debauchery and ruinous extravagance are quite inconsistent with each other, and with the chronology of the established facts of his early life; and the strong and remorseful language in which he himself refers to his former religious indifference, and which has been supposed to corroborate these stories, does not by any means necessarily bear this interpretation. All that we need infer is that, up to a certain epoch, Oliver paid little attention to the deeper and more serious questions which are connected with the relations between God and man, and which are inseparable from all real self-knowledge and knowledge of other men, and an acquaintance with which is the spring of all the higher impulses of human action. His higher nature remained stagnant and undeveloped, his morality was merely conventional, and his actions, if blameless in themselves, were guided only by secondary and external considerations. He accepted his morality and his religious creed from

his family and neighbours, and he conformed his actions to the ordinary and customary standards of the society in which he lived. The well-springs of his own nature had never been drawn from, and his own life had in fact not yet commenced. How the change *did* commence—whether the self-evolution was convulsive but gradual, as his own expressions seem rather to indicate, and like the struggles into consciousness and renewed life of a man recovering from drowning; or whether it was a sudden revelation of unstirred forces, and unrecognised responsibilities; whether the dawning to the perfect day was slow, and often dimmed by the mists and vapours of departing night, or whether the gleam of light from above which disclosed the truth, and the conviction of that truth were simultaneous—we can only conjecture. All that we know is, that the revolution seriously affected his bodily health, and for a time seemed to threaten the subversion of the intellect itself. The depths and capabilities of the nature thus aroused were indeed so great that the mind of the man himself reeled under this new birth. Dr. Simcott, of Huntingdon, and Sir Theodore Mayerne, the Court physician in London, both prescribed for him as a hypochondriac. Gradually, however, his mind became clearer and more composed. The exaggerated and overwhelming sense of past alienation from God gradually gave way to an earnest reliance on the active assistance and guardianship of

Divine Love, which he never again lost in all the trials of his subsequent career. His bodily constitution, also, though perhaps never fundamentally strong, and undermined by the unhealthy air of the Fens, became outwardly robust, and capable, under the influence of a powerful will, of undergoing a great amount of physical exertion.

One of those who had been attached to his household when he was Lord Protector, Mr. John Maidston, writing to Governor Winthrop, in New England, at the end of March, 1660, when the Presbyterian Members had resumed their seats in the Long Parliament, under the authority of Monk, and the Restoration was no longer doubtful, has given a most striking delineation of Oliver, as he knew him, or as he appeared to him. 'His body,' he says, 'was well-compact and strong, his stature under six foot (I believe about two inches), his head so shaped as you might see it a storehouse and shop both of a vast treasury of natural parts.' The Royalist, Sir Philip Warwick, recalling in later years his recollection of the first time when he saw Oliver at the commencement of the Long Parliament, speaks of his 'stature' as 'of a good size, his countenance swollen and reddish, his voice sharp and untunable, and his eloquence full of fervour,' and complains that he was 'very much hearkened unto.' The portrait painted by Sir Peter Lely towards the close of Oliver's life, which appears to me to correspond best to my con-

ception of the real man, is quite in harmony with Maidston's description, and lends strength to the theory as to the original from whom Milton drew his portrait of Adam:—

> His fair large front and eye sublime declar'd
> Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
> Round from his parted forelock manly hung
> Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad.

The massive breadth of the forehead, and the large roughly-cut nose give an impression of intellectual ability and natural leadership, which is confirmed and yet modified in its character by the other features of the countenance. The eyes, full of composed and deep thoughtfulness, yet concentrated and imperative in their almost threatening look of searching scrutiny, seem to intimate the same poise of the intellect and the emotions which is expressed by the full, firm, nervous mouth and powerfully rounded chin, in which, with all their strength, there is not a touch of sinister hardness, or insolent brutality. The impression left by the face as a whole is of well-ordered though passionate force of character; and the feeling it is calculated to inspire is not that of terrified aversion, but of deep and overpowering awe. To such a man as this picture seems to portray, it would be very difficult to say no; but there is that in the face which appears also to warrant the conviction that moral courage would be the safest and readiest road to his sympathy and protection. It is the face of one with whom absolute authority was an incident of his nature,

rather than an impulse of personal will—who was an instinctive rather than a voluntary autocrat. That this instinct of command was a leading characteristic of Oliver, of the existence of which he was himself from time to time even painfully conscious, and from the opportunities and necessity of which he often struggled to escape as from a temptation, no one who has studied his actions at all deeply can entertain a doubt. An unfriendly writer testifies to the earnestness with which he endeavoured to dissuade Fairfax from his obstinate resolution to surrender the chief command of the army on the breach with the Scotch Covenanters when they proclaimed the King of Scots. And I believe that his own declaration to his first Protectoral Parliament as to his conduct after the crowning victory at Worcester is quite true: 'I say to you, I hoped to have had leave to retire to a private life. I begged to be dismissed of my charge; I begged it again and again; and God be Judge between me and all men, if I lie in this matter. That I lie not in matter of fact, is known to very many; but whether I tell a lie in my heart, as labouring to represent to you what was not upon my heart, I say, the Lord be Judge! Let uncharitable men, who measure others by themselves, judge as they please! But I could not obtain what my soul longed for.' He affirms—and, I believe, with equal truth—the same desire to have been a main cause of his summoning the 'Little Parliament'

after the dissolution of the Long Parliament. 'A chief end to myself was to lay down the power which was in my hands. I say to you again, in the presence of that God who hath blessed and been with me in all my adversities and successes, *that* was as to myself my greatest end! A desire, perhaps, I am afraid sinful enough, to be quit of the power God had most clearly by his Providence put into my hands, before he called me to lay it down, before these honest ends of our fighting were attained and settled! I say the authority I had in my hand, being so boundless as it was. By Act of Parliament I was Lord General of all the Forces in the three nations of England, Scotland, and Ireland : . . . in which unlimited condition I did not desire to live a day.' His answer to a letter from Cardinal Mazarin, written at this crisis, testifies curiously how fruitlessly he endeavoured to reduce himself in his own eyes to the position of a simple private individual, and to hold back his hand from the guiding helm of State.

But although he retained, as a rule, the control over his autocratic inclination, or by convulsive efforts sought to relieve himself from its temptations, in all probability the decisions and actions of his life were more or less affected by it, and at times were, under its influence, warped from the standard of justice and right. Passing over the doubtful case of his forcible dissolution of the Long Parliament, in which he acted, no doubt, whether justifiably or not,

on the impulse of the moment, and without any clearly premeditated design, and the terrible scene at Drogheda, as to which his own despatch to the Speaker shows evident moral misgivings, we seem to trace the occasional predominance of the impatient spirit of conscious ability in some of those arbitrary acts during his Protectorate, in which he sacrificed the privileges of his Parliaments and the liberties of individuals to the professed necessities of the situation. A good deal may be urged with plausibility in defence of these questionable proceedings, and in proof that the necessity was real and urgent; but they nevertheless leave behind, on the mind of an impartial observer, a suspicion that their real explanation lies in the autocratic and passionate nature of the Protector himself, which sometimes broke through the restraints of his better judgment, and sometimes created the very necessity which in his self-deception he alleged as his excuse. To such cases, and similar backslidings on other points from the moral standard by which he professed to be actuated, and to which, I believe, his actions were generally conformed, the remark applies with which Maidston concludes his discriminating estimate already alluded to:—'He lived and died in comfortable communion with God, as judicious persons near him well observed. He was that Mordecai that sought the welfare of his people and spake peace to his seed. Yet were his temptations such, as it appeared frequently that he

that had grace enough for many men, may have too little for himself, the treasure he had being but in an earthen vessel, and that equally defiled with original sin as any other man's nature is.' The exact proportion between the temptations resisted and the temptations yielded to in the case of Oliver Cromwell can, of course, never be satisfactorily determined, nor do I pretend to draw either a perfect ruler or a faultless man; but it is important to observe that one who saw the failures, had no doubt at the same time as to the general bias of the character. 'His temper was exceeding fiery,' Maidston himself says, 'as I have known, but the flame of it kept down, for the most part, or soon allayed with those moral endowments he had. He was naturally compassionate towards objects in distress, even to an effeminate measure; though God had made him a heart wherein was left little room for any fear but what was due to himself, of which there was a large proportion, yet did he exceed in tenderness towards sufferers. A larger soul, I think, hath seldom dwelt in a house of clay than his was. I do believe, if his story were impartially transmitted, and the unprejudiced world well possessed with it, she would add him to her nine worthies, and make up that number a *Decemviri*.' The temptations of a period of revolution to a man who is conscious of the capacity to govern are so great, that no one who has not examined into the credibility of the evidence which is often thought to

afford convincing proof of the designing and selfish ambition of Oliver, and has seen it again and again disappear on an application of the ordinary tests of truth and falshood, can acquire that confidence in the general rectitude and anxious disinterestedness of his conduct which can entitle him to regard the deviations from right as the marked exceptions to the general rule, and to pronounce a favourable moral verdict on the character of the man as a whole. Such a verdict however may, I believe, be safely given in the case of Oliver Cromwell. In contrast with the almost single case of apparent cruelty and blood-thirstiness at the capture of Drogheda, stand not only repeated acts of clemency and compassion, but the testimony of his most prejudiced opponents as to his general aversion to cruelty and to blood-shedding, and his habitual magnanimity. Those only will render the decision doubtful as to his moral estimation who insist on attributing to him an ideal character of pure faultlessness, at the expense of the reputation of all the great men with whom he came into political collision, and of the dictates of justice and humanity.

This general predominance of self-restraint and moderation in the conduct of Oliver was greatly aided by another quality of his natural disposition, which those have lost sight of who rest his claims to admiration on the commanding influences of a strong will. Though his imperial capacity might sometimes make

him impatient of opposition and mismanagement, he possessed also, in a large measure, the moderation and the patience which spring from a wide and far-sighted perception of the situation in all its aspects. The same power which enabled him to apprehend so quickly and so justly the true ends to be pursued, and the best ways to those ends, gave him also a sympathetic insight into the different light in which the same questions might present themselves to the minds and feelings of other men equally conscientious and equally eager to achieve the same substantial end. Seldom, if ever, has so emotional a nature, so strong a will, and so consciously superior an intellect been so tolerant of the weakness and hesitations of others. A natural insight into character, slightly weakened, perhaps, by a leaning towards the most charitable construction of doubtful features, gave him a power of appealing to common feelings and aspirations in those whose outward action was most inharmonious with his own. Strong in himself, he preferred to disarm rather than to crush opposition. The prominence of the few occasions on which he overcame his opponents by an appeal to force has misled readers of history into the idea that this was his habitual mode of action; and many eloquent words have been wasted both on his supposed heroic contempt for formularies and shams, and on the baseness of the triumph in his success of brute force over thoughtful conscientiousness. But, in fact, with the capacity

and natural impulses of an autocrat, Oliver possessed the truest appreciation of the inferiority intellectually as well as morally of Force to Reason. A resort to the former he always regarded as a confession of weakness, as mortifying to his own intellectual pride as it was distasteful to his keen moral perceptions, and which, if resorted to through supposed necessity, was to be renounced at the earliest opportunity. No one would have sympathised more heartily with the exclamation attributed to the great Italian statesman of this century, in his last moments: 'I will have no *state of siege* [*i.e.* martial law]. Any fool can govern with that!' Writers on history, while dwelling on his violent and arbitrary acts, have forgotten to observe the numberless cases in which he eschewed the violence, and shrank from the absolutism. To him who studies history in its processes as well as in its results, a close consideration of the events of the period from the King's flight from Oxford, in the spring of 1646, to the fatal scene at Whitehall in January, 1649, or again, from Worcester fight to the violent scene at Westminster, will reveal in Oliver Cromwell an amount of wise patience and self-denying forbearance unequalled in the case of any man similarly placed. Or, turning to the very point on which his character as a statesman as well as a lover of constitutional freedom may be most easily assailed—his treatment of his own Parliaments—do we not recognise, in the very existence of those suc-

cessive Parliaments, the strongest indication of the spirit of a constitutional statesman? If he failed, or, rather, had not at the time of his death succeeded in his attempts to create a Representative assembly of the nation, which might share and not monopolise the seats of legislature and judicature, and which, on the other hand, might secure the foundations of society in a different spirit from that of a blind supporter of old abuses or of a religious persecutor, we ought not to ignore the wisdom and foresight which saw in his own absolute authority only a transitional necessity, which never ceased to seek expedients by which it might be safely resigned, and preferred the mortifications and immediate dangers of his reiterated experiments to the immediate security and the already assured popularity of an uncontrolled personal government. It is this voluntary preference of mixed and limited government to absolutism, under any name, however specious, that constitutes the specific characteristic of Oliver as a Civil Ruler, and which preserves the moral identity of the man who opposed and overthrew the selfish and ineradicable despotism of Charles the First, with the man who himself subsequently dissolved and decimated Parliaments, and violated the personal freedom of the subject. It was a certain perception of this identity which rendered Oliver's most arbitrary proceedings endurable, and even not distasteful to the great body of the English nation, and created that general confidence in his

purposes as well as his ability, which justified him in basing his authority on the will of the People as well as the special call of God.

But the moderating influence which, probably more than anything else, kept in check the strong will and conscious capacity for government of Oliver Cromwell was the conviction which he entertained that he was only an instrument in the hand of God, and that it was even more a crime to anticipate the leadings of Providence than it was wilfully to disregard them. He was fully impressed with the belief that it was the duty of the ablest man to wait patiently for the manifestation of the occasion for his especial work in this world, while his equally strong belief that, should he engage in any merely selfish and uninvited undertaking, the protecting power of God would be withdrawn from him operated to a great extent to restrain any natural tendency to interpret as a call from Heaven the mere promptings of his own ambition. A character which is actuated by guiding ideas such as these requires indeed the background and substratum of a strong understanding, a clear head, and an extensive knowledge of men and things, to prevent it from degenerating into that of a Fanatic. But in Oliver the Puritan ideal of a practical faith realised in the affairs of ordinary life was so entirely paramount, that it was impossible for him to dissociate the lessons of worldly wisdom of that school in which he was being daily taught from

the higher principles and impulses of his spiritual life. Both blended in every judgment he formed; and in what is considered to be the contrariety of the natural tendencies of each lay the strength and security of the conclusions which he drew from their combination.

The same width of view and discernment of the realities of things which harmonised his worldly wisdom and his higher promptings in the greater affairs of life, gave him also a true perception of the relations of what are called worldly pleasures to the higher nature of man, and raised him as much above the asceticism of a religious enthusiast as above the careless licentiousness of the jovial Cavalier. His advice to his son Richard, in a letter to Richard's wife, is to 'be above the pleasures of this life, and outward business, and then you shall have the true use and comfort of them, and not otherwise,' and by this rule he regulated his own social habits. He had naturally a strong sense of humour. 'Oliver loves an innocent jest,' says one of his soldiers, and his daily life, as well as his letters, breathe a spirit of manly cheerfulness. He had received a good education, and he maintained and carried out the studies to which he had been thus introduced. He directs the attention of his son Richard to the study of history and mathematics and 'cosmography,' and he recommends in particular Raleigh's 'History of the World' as being 'a body of history,' and therefore

more instructive than mere fragments. These pursuits, he adds, 'fit for *public* services, for which a man is born.' Contemporaries tell us of the 'noble library' that he formed, and one who was present bears testimony that Oliver was more than a match for the Scotch Commissioners at their own dialectic arguments from Mariana and Buchanan. He was a warm friend to the two older Universities, and the planner of a new one at Durham for the northern counties. He sought out and he was the generous patron or considerate friend of the best scholars and most cultivated men of the age, independently of party or personal prejudice. The arts of painting and music were both appreciated and patronised by him, and of the latter he was so fond that it might almost seem as if here we had something of the blood of the Welsh Williams, from whom he was said to be descended. He could discriminate between the use and abuse of dramatic representations, and Davenant received especial permission to perform his comedies under his protection. In the aid which he gave to the publication of Walton's Polyglot Bible he showed that, with all his devotion to the words of Scripture, he was superior to the weak misgivings of some of the most eminent of the Puritan divines as to the unsettlement of the text. His tastes and his appreciations were as broad as his sympathies, and as a consequence he drew around his person the best

men, and from their ranks filled his councils and the general administration of the three kingdoms.

The breadth of mind which was the source of Oliver's wonderful patience and consideration for others made him also incapable of retaining resentment to those who had been his personal opponents, and even induced him to regard with kindly tolerance those who were most opposed to him in political matters, as soon as the crisis had passed which rendered a hostile attitude towards them necessary on his part. He not only acted in the spirit of that piece of worldly advice, always to treat your enemy of to-day as if he might become your friend of to-morrow, but could go further, and regard with complacency the continued spirit of hostility as long as it did not force itself on his notice in the shape of acts of aggression; and even then his endurance was great if the motives of the aggressor, though mistaken, were disinterested. Among all the charges which have been brought against him there is none of revengeful implacability. He knew too well the force of early circumstances, and of the bias of natural character, ever to pass the same condemnation on the men themselves that he pronounced on their principles and the cause they espoused. As soon as they ceased to be immediately dangerous, they ceased also with him to be objects of any personal dislike. The one great idea of pursuing the work to which

he believed he had been specially called was with him so over-mastering, that what was personal to himself seemed transitory and unimportant. It was observed by an attendant on his last hours, that he was then so carried away by solicitude for the future welfare of the nation, whose highest interests he believed had been entrusted to his care, that he seemed in his prayers to forget entirely his own family. And this was the case with a man whose domestic affections were, it is universally admitted, strong in no ordinary degree.

It is scarcely necessary for me to do more than simply advert to that religious toleration which found in Oliver Cromwell, from that same largeness of mind and sympathies, one of its most determined and consistent advocates. He had that rare faculty in a strong believer of recognising the right of others to believe differently from himself, and he not only guided all his earlier career by this principle, but made it the foundation of his subsequent government, and the key-stone of his foreign policy. As he himself said, 'God give us hearts and spirits to keep things equal! which truly, I must profess to you, hath been my temper. I have had some boxes and rebukes on the one hand, and, on the other, some censuring me for Presbytery, others as an inletter to all the sects and heresies of the nation. I have borne my reproach, but I have, through God's mercy, not

been unhappy in hindering any one religion to impose upon another.' Even in the case of Roman Catholics, where the strongest prejudices of his early training and the complication of ultramontane pretensions embarrassed the question, and suggested doubts of the applicability of this great principle, the progress of time and the lessons of an enlarged experience taught him much, and in his own words to Cardinal Mazarin, 'I have of some, and those very many, had compassion, making a difference. Truly I have made a difference and, as Jude speaks, "snatched many out of the fire," the raging fire of persecution, which did tyrannise over their consciences, and encroached by an arbitrariness of power upon their estates. And herein it is my purpose, as soon as I can remove impediments and some weights that press me down, to make some further progress.'

Of the general government of the Lord Protector it is not necessary to say much. Its merits have been recognised even by the strongest political opponents, and those who were most prejudiced against his character have acknowledged that his rule only wanted the stamp of legitimacy to entitle it to nearly unmixed praise. There is scarcely a subject, indeed, to which modern legislation has been applied, to which the hand or the eye of the Protector will not be found to have been directed, and on which the principles laid down and partly carried into practice by him,

have not now been adopted. He was wise before his age, but he was also wise with a full consideraiton of the feelings and requirements of his age. He might anticipate like a philosopher, but he acted as a practical though far-seeing statesman. At home many men might detest the foundations of his authority, but they felt confidence in the justice and wisdom of his administration, while abroad he was feared and respected by all. Had he lived a little longer, there seems every probability that the wise eclecticism which he had adopted alike in his advocacy of principles and in his choice of men, would have consolidated around his throne a party, bound together by sympathies more enduring than the transient ties of party and dogmatic antecedents, and comprising within its ranks the representative elements of what was most influential and sterling in the national character, which, under his guiding mind, would have commanded more and more entirely the national confidence. For such an administration, whatever its shortcomings might have been in practice, the animating principle laid down by their great chief must have secured a certain elevation of spirit and a certain depth of root. 'A thing I am confident our liberty and prosperity depend upon—Reformation. Make it a shame to see men bold in sin and profaneness, and God will bless you. You will be a blessing to the nation; and by

this will be more repairers of breaches than by anything in the world. Truly, these things do respect the souls of men, and the spirits—which *are* the men. The mind is the man. If that be kept pure, a man signifies somewhat; if not, I would very fain see what difference there is between him and a beast. He hath only some activity to do some more mischief.'

RICHARD, LORD PROTECTOR.

We have had occasion to notice more than once how unfavourable to greatness, or at least the recognition of greatness, is the position of the son of a distinguished man. The continuity of genius which seems to be expected is seldom carried out, for even if the amount of ability in the second generation at all approaches that in the preceding, it is often of so different a type that public expectation is almost as much disappointed as if there had been no succession of ability at all. In the case of Richard Cromwell, however, there was an entire absence of genius in any form, and the effect of the contrast which is naturally suggested between him and his father has been such, that he has been denied the possession of even the amount of mental acquirements to which he can really lay claim. The circumstance that he was the least energetic, if not also the least able, of the sons of the Protector Oliver would not, perhaps, have been so fatal to his qualifications for retaining the supreme power in the kingdom, if he had been from the first the eldest son. But two brothers who

attained to youth and early manhood enjoyed successively this position before their death made Richard the heir of the family. Robert, the eldest son, as Mr. Forster has proved, did not die till May, 1639, when he was in his eighteenth year; Oliver, the second son, certainly survived long enough to take a commission in the Parliamentary Army when he had nearly completed his twentieth year, and not improbably lived for some years longer. Richard was nearly four years younger than this second eldest son, and at the time of the breaking out of the Civil War was only a boy who had not completed his sixteenth year. Writers have speculated very much as to the cause of his not taking a more active part in the events of the Civil War, forgetting how young he was; and unless he had exhibited a marked amount of enterprise and capacity, it is not likely that there would be any attempt made to put forward prematurely a younger son. The first Civil War, indeed, which was the one the exigencies of which might have demanded his active co-operation, ended before he was twenty. His eldest brother Robert had been the favourite and hope of his father, and the younger Oliver must then, as the soldier head of the family and the Protector's companion in his campaigns, have necessarily held the first place. Richard, naturally unaspiring, and contented with the happy life he led in the home circle and the mixed society of London, was not likely to thrust himself on the

attention of his father, wrapped up as the latter was in the absorbing affairs of public life. It seems unlikely that he was that son of Lieutenant-General Cromwell who is described as being, in October, 1647, 'Captain of the General's Life Guard,' or the 'other son' who is mentioned as then 'captain of a troop in Colonel Harrison's regiment,' for in the May of that year, when nearly twenty-one years of age, he was entered at Lincoln's Inn (Thurloe, his future Secretary of State, being one of his sureties),—and there had been no special call to active service in the meantime. His father's serious attention was probably first directed to him when negotiations for a marriage were entered into on his behalf at the beginning of the year 1648—first, with the Hungerfords, and afterwards (successfully) with the Maiiors of Hursley, in Hampshire. Till that time his character would be of secondary importance, and he would be looked upon in his family as a mere boy. From the fact of the negotiations being in behalf of *Richard*, young Oliver seems to have been already dead. The attention of the father was then drawn to the fact that Richard, whatever were his merits, was wholly wanting in that weight of character which befitted, in his opinion, every Englishman, and which certainly he would wish to see in any son of his own, and particularly in the future head of the family. This made him, no doubt, especially careful as to the choice he made for his son—the offer of the Hunger-

fords, a family half Royalist, half Presbyterian, though much greater than that of the Maiiors, being rejected on account of 'difference of ties,' and not the same 'assurance of godliness' in parents and daughter. The negotiation with Mr. Maiior, however, was a protracted one, being much interrupted by the campaign of 1648, as well as by the necessity of providing in the marriage arrangements against evil days in a family so precariously situated as that of the Cromwells. But Richard, we learn from his father's letters, had 'a great desire to come down and wait on' Dorothy Maiior, and 'minded that more than to attend to business' at home; Oliver himself was desirous to complete the matter before he started on his Irish campaign, and on the 1st of May, 1649, the marriage was solemnized. The letters which passed during the succeeding years in the new family circle thus formed give us the only insight we possess into Richard's character at this period of his life. I have already referred to the advice conveyed in one or two of these letters respecting his pursuits and mode of life, and we have seen how his father endeavoured to rouse him to a stronger sense of the demands of his situation in life and to the higher purposes of existence. In the midst of his most serious affairs of State, Oliver never ceases to reiterate his counsels, and to repeat his entreaties to Mr. Maiior to second his efforts with Richard. 'Idleness' seems to be the established characteristic

of the latter in his father's eyes, who, however, writes playfully rather than seriously on that point. He was not without some encouragement in his efforts—some letters from Richard 'had a good savour,'—the father 'took them kindly, and liked expressions when they came plainly from the heart, and were not strained or affected;' but he 'needed good counsel; he was in the dangerous time of his age, and it was a very vain world.' Oliver uses every variety of tone, from the most playful banter to the most solemn adjuration, and endeavours to enlist Dorothy also in the efforts he is making for her husband's guidance. But Richard, though excellent in his intentions, was careless and extravagant; he got into debt and borrowed money from his father-in-law, and in the middle of the year 1651 his conduct elicited the following observations from his father addressed to Mr. Maiior:—'I hear my son hath exceeded his allowance, and is in debt. Truly I cannot commend him therein; wisdom requiring his living within compass, and calling for it at his hands. And, in my judgment, the reputation arising from thence would have been more real honour than what is attained the other way. I believe vain men will speak well of him that does ill. I desire to be understood that I grudge him not laudable recreations, nor an honourable carriage of himself in them; nor is any matter of charge like to fall to my share a stick with me. Truly I can find in my heart to allow him not

only a sufficiency, but more for his good. But if pleasure and self-satisfaction be made the business of a man's life, so much cost laid out upon it, so much time spent on it, as rather answers appetite than the will of God, or is comely before his saints, I scruple to feed this humour; and God forbid that his being my son should be his claim to live not pleasingly to our heavenly Father, who hath raised me out of the dust to be what I am. I desire your faithfulness (he being also your concernment as well as mine) to advise him to approve himself to the Lord in his course of life, and to search his statutes for a rule to conscience, and to seek grace from Christ to enable him to walk therein. This hath life in it, and will come to somewhat; what is a poor creature without this? This will not abridge of lawful pleasures, but teach such a use of them as will have the peace of a good conscience going along with it. Sir, I write what is in my heart; I pray you communicate my mind herein to my son, and be his remembrancer in these things. Truly I love him; he is dear to me, and so is his wife, and for their sakes do I thus write. They shall not want comfort or encouragement from me, so far as I may afford it. But indeed I cannot think I do well to feed a voluptuous humour in my son, if he should make pleasure the business of his life, in a time when some precious saints are bleeding and breathing out their last for the safety of the rest. Sir, I beseech you, believe I

here say not this to save my purse, for I shall willingly do what is convenient to satisfy his occasions as I have opportunity. But as I pray he may not walk in a course not pleasing to the Lord, so it lieth upon me to give him in love the best counsel I may, and I know not how better to convey it to him than by so good a hand as yours. Sir, I pray you, acquaint him with these thoughts of mine. And remember my love to my daughter, for whose sake I shall be induced to do any reasonable thing.'

I have quoted this admonition of the Protector Oliver at some length, because it exhibits more clearly than any other statement the real defects in Richard's character, and the anxiety which they produced in his father's mind. He had not a spark of genius, and he had no *sustained* elevation of purpose; but he was neither the fool, nor the poor-spirited, cowardly man that is commonly supposed. He was only an easy-tempered *pococurante*, thoroughly contented with any situation in which he found himself placed by circumstances or the will of others, seeking only to avoid the necessity of change or decided action as long as possible, and though not unmindful of the course of events, and well acquainted with the facts of the situation, always hoping that something would arise which might prevent the necessity of his acting, or of his taking any but the least irksome and most pleasant line of action. He had considerable pleasantry and dry humour, but as

little brilliancy in his wit as he had of capacity to command the political situation in more serious matters. He was universally popular among his neighbours in Hampshire, as a genial and accomplished country gentleman. His horses and his dogs were his great delight, and his constant occupations were hawking and hunting and the ordinary pleasures of a country life. These tastes he preserved to the close of his long life, keeping his harriers after his return to Hursley from the Continent and Cheshunt, and riding out with the hounds, it is said, with unabated spirit when he was eighty years of age. He made no distinction of parties in his social intercourse,—his father's example would tend to confirm his natural disposition in this respect—but he lived so much on the same friendly terms with all, that it is not surprising that he was thought to possess no fixed political or religious views of his own. Yet he was not a thoughtless man on such matters. He fully appreciated his father's principles, both religious and political, and had a great tenacity in such matters, which contrasts curiously with his want of enterprise when their interests were at stake, and when it lay with him to secure those interests. There seems to be no foundation for the stories of his being licentious in his morals, and it is clear from his father's letter that no rumour of anything of that sort had reached him. All the testimony which has been preserved as to his doings at Hursley, from those who knew him

there, represents him as leading a perfectly innocent if unmeaning life. At a subsequent period of his life he is said to have attended on Sundays at the single service given at the parish church of Hursley, and at another time of the day at the Baptist chapel at Romsey. Long after the Restoration of the King he maintained an intimate friendship with his former chaplain, Mr. Howe, and visited him on his death-bed, the parting between them being described as very affecting. When his father was on his death-bed, and just before the cares of sovereignty were transferred to his own shoulders, he wrote a letter to his friend and connection by marriage, Captain John Dunch, on the death of two common friends, which is not wanting in dignity, and shows a spirit sufficiently serious and thoughtful when his mind was directed to such topics. 'I received your last sad intelligence,' he writes, 'of the death of St. Barbe and his lady. I am persuaded they are out of a troublesome world, and certainly happy; the loss is not so much theirs as their neighbours'. The stroke of death is so forcible that the strongest cannot stand against it; no weapons of the flesh to encounter the grave; they must be spiritual. Such I hope they had (by the grace of God) to make a victory, to charge through into the place of their wishes and glory. His friendship will make me to rejoice in his and his wife's happiness. It is a providential stroke, and ought to teach the most healthy and happy. I

am fully persuaded the country hath a loss in him and I also,—*they* as wanting one that would assist them in difficulties; *I* as a friend.' He then refers to the dangerous state in which his father lay, and the slight hopes raised by a fit of ague, 'shall it please God to go on with his gentle hand, and bring him temperately out of this fit;' which result, he says, would be 'a new life to his Highness, and the affairs as they now stand of this nation, with the Protestant interest of Christendom. I believe,' he continues, 'the rumour of this dangerous illness hath flown into all parts of this nation, and hath caused several persons of ill-affection to prick up their ears, which will cause friends to be vigilant, for they will hope they have a game to play. It is a time that will discover all colours, and much of the disposition of the nation may be now gathered. I hear that those that have been enemies, others that have been no friends, some of both, are startled, fearing their possessions, and worser conditions, not considering their affection, in this hazard his Highness is in. It must be the goodness of God that shall save him, and his knowledge of the state of England and of Christendom; the spirit of prayer which is poured out for him, and the faith which is acted on behalf of him, give us the best comfort and hopes.'

This is not the letter of one who was a fool, or who was unacquainted with the nature and bearings of the crisis in which he would have to take the principal

part, should his father's illness terminate fatally. But the position of Richard at the death of the Protector Oliver was one which demanded a rare combination of qualities to enable him to maintain his power. He, on the contrary, had little more than the passive virtues. Personally he would rouse dislike nowhere, but when it was roused against his Government there was nothing in him to resist or overcome it, unless it were the mere persistence of inertia. The successor to a newly-founded dynasty is always in a precarious position, for that feeling of a distinct and superior caste which is the great secret of the authority of an hereditary king, as such, over the nation he is called to govern, has not had yet time to root itself in the popular mind, while the other support to a new throne, the personal ascendancy of the great founder, is gone. The successor is still looked upon as one of the caste from which the founder raised himself, and, as is well known, every caste in society is distrustful and intolerant of the rule of one of its own members. The artisan prefers the leadership of the employer of labour; the middle class man (however he may call for middle-class rule) has more satisfaction in the ascendancy and more consideration for the short-coming of the aristocrat; and the nation, as a whole, prefers and bears with much more from the heir of its hereditary kings than from any scion of a new reigning family. What was looked upon as natural indifference in

Charles Stuart the younger would be criticised as indolent incapacity in Richard Cromwell; and the pleasant, personal manners which were the source of unbounded popularity in the case of the former, would be underrated in the latter, and regarded as the condescension of a *parvenu* from the proper dignity of a king. Oliver had probably been long distracted in his resolution as to the successor he should name. On the one side were the elements of authority attaching to even the first step in an hereditary descent of the Crown; on the other hand, was the character of Richard himself. Yet even this, as it would not provoke opposition, might conciliate public opinion by a judicious distribution of the Administrative and Cabinet appointments, and by a balance of the conflicting powers of the Puritan party. Such a scheme constituted probably the contents of the paper which Oliver is said to have mentioned on his death-bed, as his final disposition, but which could not be found. He had then at that dying moment nothing further to say than that 'Richard' was to be the new head of the Government; the paper might be discovered; if not, the result must be left in the hands of Providence.

Richard, on his accession, had a natural party, but no personal adherents. His natural supporters were the old advisers of his father and the men whom Oliver had gathered around him out of nearly every political and religious section of the nation. But

over these Richard had no personal hold but their sense of the public and their own interest, and such feeling of attachment as they might have for the memory of his father. He had lived, as we have seen, with men of all parties, and though he was never a Cavalier in his feelings or opinions, some of the Cavaliers even had persuaded themselves that he would hasten to restore the King,—so little had been the impression left by him of his personal opinions. With the army, even if he ever held more than a nominal authority in their ranks, he had no special ties and no individual influence. With the officers the feeling respecting him was divided between jealousy of the other councillors, and perhaps the older nobility, whom Richard might prefer to place in the high posts of the Government, distrust of his earnestness in their cause, and (in the case of his uncles Desborough and Jones and his brother-in-law Fleetwood) the unrespectful and invidious patronage of relatives. The Republican party in the Army and among the class of statesmen retained their aversion to the office of Protector, while they lost their fear of its possessor, and also the controlling restraints of old associations, which had at times half disarmed their antagonism and their anger in the case of Oliver. The Presbyterians were willing enough to adopt Richard as a temporary head, but they were desirous to clip his independent power, until they had seen whether they could not find a

more suitable head for a new dynasty. One man only might have saved him, if he also had not been disqualified by his antecedents and personal character. This was his younger brother, Henry.

Henry Cromwell was an able man, and an admirable administrator, full of the spirit of his father's wisest policy in many respects, and equal to any occasion on which his judgment made him resolve to take effective action. He had agreeable manners and a love of mixed society, though there was probably no truth in the scandalous rumours which reached England and his family, and which he seems to have refuted by unexceptionable testimony to the contrary. As far as the natural opponents of his father's government were concerned, he took a wise and large view of the situation; and the effect of his tolerant conciliation was very evident in the tranquillity and satisfaction of the Irish people under his rule. But he was not equally tolerant of the alienated sections of the Puritan party and of disaffected friends. He had no old associations such as those of his father with the Republicans and 'Anabaptists,' of the Army and the Parliament, and did not, like him, 'understand the men,' and see the common elements and sympathies which still might form a bond of future union. He could only see in Vane 'a rotten member of the Commonwealth,' in the Army only a dangerous agent of arbitrary power, and in the Sectaries only unreasonable and fanatic men.

He had no natural insight into character, and his own prejudices and his anger at the personal attacks on his father, to whose memory he was devoted, and whose government he thought the ideal of the 'Good Old Cause,' prevented him from availing himself of his undoubted powers of observation and discernment. He had excellent sense and a sound judgment as to the natural and probable issues of events, but his ability was not sufficiently *commanding*, as a whole, to overawe opposition and control the situation. He could act himself, if in his judgment he seemed called on to do so; but he could not see clearly enough into the condition of affairs at a distance to be able to give more than general advice. He complained to his friends that he had been left quite unacquainted with the inner workings of affairs in England; and he had not the resources of genius in himself to make up for the deficiency. He was an agreeable companion, but he had not the sweet temper of Richard, and his more strongly pronounced opinions and actions often excited personal dislike. But what was most disqualifying in Henry at this crisis was the fact that he had no enterprise, and was of a despondent spirit. Where he should have animated his inert brother to action by pointing out the advantages he actually possessed, he could only dwell sorrowfully on the dangers and difficulties, and lament his own inability to assist him by advice or personal co-operation. All he could do was to

promise to maintain his own government in Ireland, and write excellent admonitory letters to his mischievously 'compliant' brother-in-law Fleetwood. He had no self-confidence, and his very absence of personal ambition and dislike of arbitrary measures and bloodshed made him untrue to his adherents and his own cause when the crisis came. He succumbed tamely to the Republicans when his brother was deposed; and his conduct on the eve of the Restoration, if personally dignified, was deficient in duty to his responsibilities as a trustee and centre of power for the 'Good Old Cause.' In his fall, England lost a wise and right-minded administrator, but hardly a great statesman.

The serious and repeated illnesses of Thurloe, the best informed of Oliver's old advisers, in the very crisis of the situation, accelerated the downfall of Richard. One moment's breathless calm and quiet acquiescence in his government had followed his accession; but this was rather because his enemies of all parties expected the Government to fall of itself with the death of the Protector Oliver. But when it remained erect and unassailed, there was a disposition to exaggerate its strength, and to rejoice in its unexpected stability. That would have been the moment for the personal *action* of the new Protector. But it was lost, and when he did act, it was not by balancing contending parties, and so becoming the master of the position; but by resorting to successive

and conflicting lines of policy, which roused all parties against him, and disheartened and disarmed his friends. He allowed the Parliament to curtail his powers, to lower his authority, and then to alienate and irritate to the utmost the Army and the officers. He next dissolved the Parliament at the dictation of the officers, and then, deserted by all parties alike, was himself deposed without a struggle, unless we call that a struggle which consisted in the menace of his continued residence (notwithstanding the orders of Parliament) in the royal palaces. He fell, not because he did not see what ought to be done, but because he acted too late, and at the wrong moment. Had he interposed sooner with the Parliament in behalf of the Army, the Army would have afterwards supported him even against its own officers, if the appeal had been made to them in the name of their old General. Even at the last, had he boldly resumed his authority on the quarrel of the Army with the restored Long Parliament, and issued writs for a new Parliament, pledging himself to the officers to defend their just interests as well as the common public cause, they would have probably acquiesced, and the nation would have welcomed and supported him. But such was not to be the case with 'idle Dick Cromwell,' and he retired into private life. Once again he reappears in our State Papers as the willing head of a conspiracy for his restoration, during the angry state of public opinion caused by

the humiliations of the Dutch war; but he disappointed even that doubtful opening of fortune by his dilatory inaction; and our last glimpse of him is in Westminster Hall, as a suitor against his own daughters. The suit was a just one, but it proved most painfully that the kind-hearted old country gentleman had no moral control over his own household, and finally had forfeited the respect of his own children.

CHARLES THE SECOND.

AMONG all the English Sovereigns there is no instance of a popular favourite to whose memory such injustice has been done, intellectually, as it has to the so-called 'Merry Monarch.' The popular conception of Charles Stuart the Younger—and among the general English public there is no king of whom there is a more distinct conception—is of an easy, good-natured, if not good-hearted voluptuary—socially an accomplished gentleman and wit, but with neither the capacity nor the desire for government or serious affairs, who managed to saunter through a reign of a quarter of a century, getting as much pleasure and irresponsibility as he could for himself amidst the general scramble of unprincipled men for power and place; but without the enterprise or perseverance necessary to any scheme for establishing the autocracy of the Crown, and with such a wholesome dread of 'going again on his travels,' or renewing the fatal scene at the window in Whitehall, as to afford a sure guarantee that he would retreat from any such attempt on the first

serious demonstration of popular resentment. As might be expected, there is much in this conception of Charles which belonged to his real character; yet as a representation of that character as a whole it is defective and delusive.

Whatever may be our difficulty in ascertaining what his real character was—and there *are* remarkable difficulties in his case—there can be no doubt of one point, and that is that Charles was by far the ablest of the English Stuarts. This is not high praise in itself, but we have unexceptionable evidence that as an individual, as distinguished from a Ruler, there have been few men who have mounted the throne of England who can bear comparison with him in intellectual capabilities. Sir William Temple —who whatever may be his disqualifications for judging of the character of Charles as a whole, was eminently qualified for forming a correct judgment of him in this point of view—gives us the following estimate, with which I may fitly introduce the subject. Speaking of an interview which he had with the King, he says:—'I never saw him in better humour, nor ever knew a more agreeable conversation when he was so, and where he was pleased to be familiar; great quickness of conception, great pleasantness of wit, with great variety of knowledge, more observation, and truer judgment of men than one would have imagined by so careless and easy a manner as was natural to him in all he did and said.

He desired nothing but that he might be easy himself, and that everybody else should be so.' The last sentence, which conveys an inference and speculation on Temple's own part, whether true or false, stands, of course, on another basis of evidence from the specific results of his own observation, recorded in the sentences which precede, and which are tolerably conclusive as to the marked capacity of Charles in matters of serious import.

The character of Charles, whatever it may have been originally, appears to me to have been influenced in its practical development by two somewhat conflicting circumstances. He was the representative of the principle of legitimacy, and he was an adventurer. Born in the purple, he had scarcely time to realise the notions of high prerogative and right divine which were in the ascendant in the Court of Charles the First, when at the age of twelve he was placed in the nominal command of a guard raised by his father, at the outbreak of a great struggle, in which the validity of those royal pretensions was subjected to the severe practical test of civil war; and from that time his life for the next four years was the wandering one of a soldier, varied only by the hollow and fleeting honours of a puppet-court. When even a remote island of his father's dominions was no longer a safe seat for this factitious royalty, he became at the age of sixteen a refugee in a foreign country; and for nearly fourteen years he led the

life of a needy adventurer and an almost hopeless Pretender, scarcely relieved by the short and doubtful interlude of his roving royalty as 'King of Scots.' When at the age of thirty—mature in body and mind—he at length acquired his long-deferred inheritance, except so far as his personal pretensions as a disinherited prince, and their occasional recognition by foreign rulers might have modified it, his character had been essentially moulded in the type of an adventurer. A certain amount of ability, or at least of adroitness, presence of mind, and self-reliance must necessarily be the result of such a school of circumstances. The amount of enterprise engendered may be a variable quantity, but the virtues of endurance, patience, and (in some form or other, and to some extent) of self-control, are necessary products of this discipline. Much, of course, must depend on the quality of the original material thus affected, and the natural temperament and intellectual capacity of Charles must form a principal and determining element in any analysis of his character; but (be these what they might) he could never escape from his recollections of half a generation as a struggling adventurer.

It might seem at first as if there could have been little more in common between Charles and the English world into which his 'Restoration' (as it was called) really first introduced him, than a recognition of those hereditary pretensions which the

country of his birth was at length proclaiming with wild and vague enthusiasm. His own past life—which must always have been to him the most thoroughly realised portion of his life—lay quite apart from that of England during the same period, and it might seem that there could be little sympathy between the two. Yet the life of Englishmen at home had also been, during the preceding twenty years, very much that of adventurers, full of strange vicissitudes, new and untrodden ways, and restless uncertainty and change. A desire for repose, under almost any conditions, had for the time succeeded the fever of their aspirations for the highest types of national and individual life. They too welcomed the restoration of the exiled Stuarts as an epoch not of hope but of rest, in which they might forget what they had been, in a dream of indolent pleasure. What to Charles was the realisation of his wildest hopes was with the nation really (notwithstanding the external delirium of joy) the resignation of disappointed hope. The *adventures* of both People and Ruler had ended, and they welcomed each other, and exchanged greetings, with a not entirely dissimilar retrospect, and with identical wishes for the present, though their feelings were really essentially different, and as such gave no security for harmony between them in the future. The public mind in England had been nearly as much affected and demoralised by the spirit of the past as

had that of the adventurer whom they summoned to their aid, and the history of the succeeding years is as much an exemplification of the effects of this training on the character of the nation at large as of Charles himself; and this fact rendered the completeness of his change of scene and associations more apparent than real.

The 'Restoration' brought to Charles *rest*—as it did momentarily to the nation—but the rest was not similar in character. In the nation it was the torpor of exhaustion, in the King it was the repose of a more assured position. To call Charles indolent is to mistake his disposition, or to place an unusual meaning on the word. The love of pleasure and of ease was, no doubt, a constituent and important element of his nature. Pleasure and the undisturbed pursuit of pleasure were certainly a great feature in his purposes of life, but the enjoyment of life as a whole was his real and leading disposition. He did not confine his attention to, or even take the most keen interest in, what are called, *par excellence*, the *pleasures* of life. He indulged in these to excess, but he carried his spirit of enjoyment into departments which are considered the most alien to pleasure as such. His conception of the sphere of enjoyment, indeed, covered the whole field of life. His mind was much too active and powerful to rest satisfied with the narrow province of the ordinary pleasure seeker. The very scepticism which he had imbibed from the

school in which he had been brought up, as to the reality of great principles, and of the recognised axioms of human conduct, widened his field of amusement. What was to earnest men a grave matter of serious and business-like attention, became in his eyes an amusing comedy of errors. The play of human feelings, and the phantasmagoria of politics, had a sensuous and irresistible charm for him. He was not satisfied until he had fathomed the character and natures of all the leading actors in the scenes passing around him, and then it was his great pleasure to set the whole machine in motion, and play a game of life according to his preconceived ideas of the value and import of the various figure-pieces. He looked at everything, not with reference to what it was, but to what it might be made to appear; and at men not with regard to their characters and principles, but to the significance of the parts they had undertaken to play. To acquire this minute knowledge of men and circumstances, so as to obtain a quiet mastery over them, at least in his own mind, appeared, indeed, to him essential to the preservation of his power of enjoying life according to his wishes, and he made a new pleasure out of a supposed necessity. Although careless in his manner, a carelessness which expressed faithfully his estimate of the importance of human life and actions, but not his interest and amusement in them, he had naturally an inquisitive as well as an observant mind, and

though he affected to trifle with consequences, he was not the less anxious to pry into the secrets of nature. His knowledge, though not contemptible, came from observation rather than from study. So far as observation and quickness of perception would carry him, his mind was scientific in its tone. He liked to attend anatomical dissections—it was said popularly from anxiety about his own health, and no doubt he was desirous it should be attributed to that cause alone, in order to preserve his popular character of indifference to wider considerations. But he also engaged in chemical experiments, took great interest in the scientific improvement of artillery, and directed his attention beyond anything else to naval architecture. The empirical and perceptive faculties implied in scientific pursuits, as distinguished from *a priori* truths and the elements of an intelligent faith—Science, in fact, in its unreligious aspect—were peculiarly congenial to his mind. He was an earnest man, so far as one to whom principles and men were alike unreal and conventional could be so. But he had learned the lesson from the events of his early life, that the secret of obtaining and retaining real power lies in obtaining and preserving a character for careless indifference, in never parading the possession of power before the public eye, and yet always treating its absence as a provisional accident. In this way he secured an amount of actual licence for his own will which realised the wildest aims of

his father. He tried, and usually with success, to avoid any appearance of annoyance at unexpected or successful opposition to his plans. He regarded such contretemps as inevitable, and gave way for the time as little as he could, but quite as much as was needed. He received Lord Russell and his colleagues as his ministers without apparent distaste, and when the time was ripe, and he had quietly made their position untenable, blandly accepted their resignations 'with all his heart.' He never entirely broke with any man of influence or ability until he felt that he could be turned to no further account, and was only a dangerous nuisance. From the first he was determined himself to govern, though this should not be seen by the public, and only felt imperfectly by his Ministers themselves. He had his own ideas (though they never amounted to fixed plans) as to the government and organisation of England, just as he took pleasure and displayed considerable skill in planting, gardening, and building. But he kept his ideas in the former case to himself, and never made a confidant of any one man or woman. Nor did he ever commit himself definitely and unreservedly to any one line of policy, or place himself in the hands entirely of any one minister. He resembled his father in entertaining several plans at the same time, but he had the diplomatic talent, in which his father was entirely wanting, of making their very discrepancies and antagonisms subservient

to his general purpose. He had usually two or three plans of policy in seeming suspense, and two or three ministers each rejoicing in a very limited, but, as he supposed, undivided confidence. Most of the men of his time, no doubt he regarded with amused contempt. He had gauged the exact amount of the talents, and he had a clear knowledge and appreciation of the special characters and prejudices of a Shaftesbury, an Arlington, a Danby, a Halifax, and a Russell, and he made use of them all in turn, and from the conflict or balance of their characters and prejudices managed to avoid the dictation of any of them, while it became quite impossible to gather *his* real mind from the composition of any of his administrations. His own policy was always ambiguous, and the public leapt to the conclusion, that he was a careless indifferentist who had no policy at all. He carried this ambiguity even into the province of his personal debaucheries. If he had a mistress with French or Roman Catholic proclivities to raise the hopes of one faction, he had also a Protestant mistress at the same time to reassure the fears of others. The story is well known of Nell Gwynne's coarse but effective explanation when she was assailed by a Protestant mob in mistake for the Duchess of Portsmouth. Charles never ignored or directly opposed national prejudices when they assumed formidable dimensions, but he never succumbed to them. He temporised, made concessions, evaded decided issues, and waited and watched till, by skil-

fully availing himself of the course of events, he seemed to have been released by them rather than to have released himself from his engagements. Popular suspicion of any designs of his own was effectually disarmed by his seemingly idle habits and his cheerful affability. Who could have suspected a Royal conspirator in the chatty man of pleasure feeding the ducks in St. James's Park! Nature had attempted to mark the true character of the man by the grim sardonic features with which she had endowed him; but he persuaded his people to disbelieve in the evidence of nature. But if he deluded his own people, he deluded foreign powers also. He was, it is well known, the pensioner of France; but it is an entire mistake to suppose that he was the mere servile tool of Louis. He had made up his mind that it was quite impossible to lead the independent life he required, and escape the surveillance and interference of Parliament, if he was to be dependent for his revenue on it alone. He was too shrewd to resort to the systematic illegalities of his father to obtain extra-Parliamentary supplies; and he resolved to achieve his end out of the coffers of Louis. He cared little for the degradation to himself of such a position in the eyes of France, or of his own people, when it was accidentally disclosed to them. He was resolved not to be wholly dependent on Louis any more than on the House of Commons, and he played off the one resource against the other with

marvellous skill and success. Louis, in fact, could scarcely count more surely on Charles's support, as the reward of his money-payments, than he could on that of the popular leaders whom he also paid for opposing their King. King and patriots alike took his money, and acted very much as they would have done if they had had other resources. Charles had no desire to commit himself either to a Catholic or Protestant alliance, and though the occasions of his changes of policy might be to some extent affected by the money of Louis, on the whole, except in the political humiliation of England, Louis was decidedly the loser, and the dupe in these pecuniary transactions; and Charles himself preserved substantially a position of independence. He had nearly always the alternative to offer of a popular and anti-French policy, which would secure him willing supplies from Parliament, or of abstinence from such a course at the price of French gold; and Louis had generally no alternative but to open his coffers.

The conventional aspect in which most questions presented themselves to the mind of Charles had at least one good effect. They rendered him comparatively unsusceptible to the feelings of resentment and implacability. Naturally good-tempered, and in his familiar social intercourse willing to bear defeat in his encounters of wit with good-humour, he did not, as a rule, feel any personal grudge to those who thwarted or opposed his political schemes. He was

cold-hearted enough, it is true, to pronounce their doom with calm indifference, if policy seemed to render their removal desirable; but apart from this, he avoided the shedding of blood, and would seldom condescend to remember personal injuries. The men who had condemned his father to the scaffold he sent to a cruel death with entire phlegm, though in so doing he probably followed a policy of Royal self-assertion, and consulted the demands of excited partisans, rather than those of his own feelings. He did not press the sentence on Lambert, while he pronounced the greatest possible panegyric on the abilities and character of Vane, in declaring him to be, in his opinion, too dangerous a man to let live. Russell and Sidney suffered probably less from any fear of their personal ability than from a strong belief in their influence as the heads of a party which, but for their removal, might have succeeded after the King's death in preventing the succession of the Duke of York. On this latter point Charles had followed his usual policy of balancing pretensions and keeping his real purpose in suspense. He had indulged his own fondness for Monmouth freely, and in so doing had held in check the intrigues of James, and the uncompromising party who gathered round that Prince; while at the same time he never allowed Monmouth to assume the position of his intended heir, or to become anything else than a useful link between the Crown in his own person and the

popular aspirations which associated themselves with the name of his son. As a fact, Charles probably had a strong feeling as to the abstract rights of his brother, although he did not choose to commit himself quite irretrievably in public to this doctrine. He had, however, a settled opinion, that any alteration in the succession, if made at all, should proceed from his own will, and not from the demands and imagined necessities of the nation. In subsequent years Halifax and Sheffield (afterwards Duke of Buckingham), who both knew him well, asserted that Charles was himself an Atheist. It is tolerably certain, however, now that he became a member of the Roman Catholic Church before the Restoration. The truth probably is, that Charles had a belief in the existence of a God, but of such a God as he himself would conceive as the highest type of absolute Sovereignty—perfectly irresponsible—watching in serene seclusion the course of human affairs, and employing as the external agents of his religious administration a Church of conventional forms and conventional doctrines. When he had once recognised this agent of the Divine, he did not think it necessary to identify himself more closely with it until he received its certificate of salvation on his death-bed, satisfied till then with assisting it when convenient to him, and making use of it much as he would of any other human machinery. When he had received this necessary passport to the next world his sense of duty was satisfied, and he

apologised politely to the expectant courtiers for being so long in dying.

As far, however, as the practical affairs of life and of his own Government were concerned, Charles was an Atheist. He believed in nothing and in nobody except in himself, and in his own power of managing his own business. Having no faith, he had no real object, except the passive one of securing his own freedom of action or inaction, and carrying on the Government of England as pleasantly and with as little turmoil as possible. In this sense there is great truth in Temple's remark, which has been already quoted, that 'he desired nothing but that he might be easy himself, and that everybody else should be so.' It is impossible to conceive of a greater contrast than that offered between his Government in this respect and that of the Protector Oliver. If ever there was an attempt made to realise the presence and government of God in the administration of this country, it was made, and to some extent successfully made, by the great Protector. But able and sagacious and clear-sighted as Charles was, he may be truly said to have 'lived without God,' and the un-Godlike in the full sense of the term became the distinguishing stamp of his reign. At the best, his administration was a successful subterfuge, a clever imposture, an adroit *pis-aller*. He had a profound faith in his own traditional position as Sovereign, and he had an intense pride in his own personality as the arbiter of

the situation. Yet his plan of Government rendered it necessary that he himself should skulk behind a screen of falsehood and chicanery, and that his personality should be merged in a puppet-show. He wished well to England, yet he degraded her in the eyes of every nation of Europe, and set a stamp of ignominy on his foreign administration in the eyes of nearly every Englishman. Not a few important and valuable laws are connected with his reign, yet not one is in popular memory connected with his name and fame. We know from the personal character of his administration that he must have passively or willingly sanctioned their enactment, but he has succeeded by his system of dissimulation in preventing us from assigning with certainty any personal merits to him for any one of them. He affected to favour contradictory policies of many men in succession, so that his own position lost all distinctness; and if he escaped from the general discredit, he forfeited all claim to particular merits. He had clever ideas on public affairs, and a thorough insight into the lower motives, at least, of human action. He meant probably to pursue some policy of his own, but he ended as he began, with merely evading complicity in the policy of others. He had the ability to have set his stamp upon the age: he only succeeded in obliterating himself.

JAMES THE SECOND.

It has been the misfortune of Roman Catholicism in England, that the only two Sovereigns since the Reformation who have openly identified themselves with its cause have been both singularly ill-qualified to inspire enthusiasm by their personal characteristics. Queen Mary, whatever may be her claims to respect in certain points of view, was unquestionably most unattractive in her demeanour; and James Stuart the Younger was personally as unromantic and uninteresting a martyr as any cause has ever boasted. In his brother Charles, unshackled personal government had appealed to the support and half-disarmed the prejudice of the nation by an almost unparalleled combination of geniality and consummate tact; but in the case of James, even those most disposed to enlist themselves under the banner which he displayed, found their continued adherence to him a rather severe strain on their feelings of devoted loyalty. And even now it is difficult to peruse the records of his unfortunate career without experiencing a much stronger feeling of distaste, not to say repug-

nance, than is warranted by the actual offences and real disposition of James himself. Certainly in him error and vice lost all the grace which sometimes is held to be their palliation, if not their condonation; and his reputation remains stripped of all adventitious appeals for sympathy, except such as may spring from the merciful consideration and pity due to one who ended his days in exile and comparative obscurity. Any description of the character of such a man, apart from a narrative of events, cannot be very interesting; for any interest belonging to the period attaches itself to the events themselves, not to the man who was in turn their principal agent and their victim.

James Stuart affords in his career a remarkable example of a man of limited capacity and shallow moral nature, tempted by the mistaken estimate formed of him by others, as well as by his own undoubting self-esteem, to attempt the *rôles* of a statesman and an apostle. There was by nature just enough ability in him to have made him a respectable man of business, if circumstances had not called him to any important career; and he had just enough good principles to have made him a fairly conscientious and generally well-meaning, if not highly moral individual, if circumstances had not exposed him to any great temptations. He had a clear head for small things, with good sense in their appreciation, and when he chose had considerable powers of application to business. He was by nature obstinate, but rather

from slowness, in apprehending anything which was alien to his preconceived ideas than from any actual persistency in his nature; for he was also very impressionable when some chord of his nature was touched, or when the argument was brought within the range of his mental perceptions; and when thus affected, he was apt to take sudden resolutions in entirely opposite directions to his former line of action. He was really much influenced and led by those who could lay hold of his characteristic peculiarities, but he never willingly did anything which he did not believe to have proceeded from himself alone, and to have been dictated by his own unassisted judgment. He had the greatest desire to master the situation, and the most firm belief that he was capable of so doing. The Duke of Buckingham, according to Bishop Burnet, said of the two Royal brothers, that Charles II. 'could see things if he would,' and James 'would see things if he could.' He was a man who was injured morally and intellectually almost equally by prosperity and adversity. By the former his ambition was raised, his estimate of his own abilities was enormously exaggerated, his confidence of success became unbounded; good sense and prudence alike deserted him, his temper became rough and arrogant, his disposition fierce and unfeeling, and his whole nature was hardened. On the other hand, adversity or an unexpected overthrow of his confident anticipations depressed his intellect

below its natural standard, crushed his personal dignity, and injuriously affected his moral integrity. And his whole career had been one of extreme vicissitudes of good and ill fortune. When too young to be much influenced in the formation of his character by external events, he had been exposed, like his elder brother, to the perils and calamities of civil war,—had been a sort of State prisoner in the hands of the victorious Parliament,—had escaped to the Continent while still a lad, and had there been subjected alike to the evils of exile, and the allurements or persecutions of his mother's religious proselytism. The obstinate elements of his nature seem to have been roused by these attempts to force him, against his own free-will, into the fold of Rome, and he resisted all overt attempts with a seeming pertinacity of Protestant conviction. He served both under Turenne and Condé with some distinction, giving evidence of aptitudes for the duties of an officer, which induced Turenne, it is said, to entertain expectations of his military capacity which were never in any way realised in succeeding years. This was one of the first instances of his really limited abilities misleading spectators into the idea that he was designed for great things. In fact, his brother's fate was exactly reversed in his case. Charles was a clever man, who was depreciated through his own wilful self-effacement. James was a man of inferior talents, who was overrated, and

who endeavoured to make the world believe that this exaggerated estimate was correct. In the early years of his brother's reign he was looked upon with considerable respect as the appropriate head of the Militia of the Crown, both by land and sea. His political influence was weakened, but not overthrown, by the downfall of his father-in-law, Clarendon. He had a sort of professional pleasure in the two services, especially in the Navy, as to which he liked to fancy himself a great administrative reformer. This, joined to a display of physical courage which passed for that presence of mind in crises in which he was really deficient, made the nation for a short time believe that they had found in him a hero-prince and a great commander. At the same time, an impetuous outspokenness, which, in truth, was the result very much of arrogance, inspired a belief in his blunt sincerity and truthfulness. But scarcely had he recommended himself to the national affections by these specious appearances of great qualities, and secured the hearty thanks and eager reward of Parliament for his services, than he began to degenerate under the effects of good-fortune and popular estimation, and to display less pleasing characteristics, which soon affected vitally the public estimate of him on nearly all points. Pepys, his subordinate in the Admiralty and devoted creature, has recorded the gossip which conveyed the first intimation of this change in the public appreciation of the Duke

in consequence of the change in his demeanour from obsequiousness to arrogant self-assumption.

By degrees the nation awoke to the conviction that James entertained extremely dangerous ideas on the subject of arbitrary power in the Executive, and was very ready to anticipate in his own personal actions their general recognition. James, in fact, had really had no experience of his own capacity for dealing with great events. A Revolution had driven him helplessly into exile; another Revolution, which he had had no part in bringing about, had replaced him in his native country, and in a position of dignity. A popular delusion had credited him with eminent abilities, in one department at least, and had conjectured the existence of corresponding talent in other directions. He accepted all these things as true measures of his capacity, and of the inherent power of the Crown, and in the fulness of his self-satisfaction he unfolded to the nation something of his real nature. Like his father, but unlike his brother Charles, his pleasure was in the display more than in the reality of power, and he reaped the fruit in a corresponding amount of unpopularity.

But the event which overthrew entirely the estimation in which he once stood with the English nation was his avowal of his conversion to Roman Catholicism. His brother Charles seems to have been already a Roman Catholic when he landed in England at the Restoration; but we have no evidence of James

having adopted these views so early. He had been a much more ardent Protestant while an exile than his brother ever was during his whole lifetime; but in some way or other the astute Church of Rome had obtained the key to his understanding and feelings on this point, and the obstinate Protestant became the obstinate Romanist. There was something, indeed, in the pretensions of Rome which was congenial to the character of James. Although he was jealous of his own independence of action, he was, as I have said, really much disposed to rely on others, through an unconscious recognition of his own inferior capacity. It was, therefore, a real relief to his whole nature when he was induced to believe that in one great department of thought he was not required by any regard to self-respect to exert his own judgment; and when, as a necessity of human nature in general, he was called on to rely implicitly on the guidance of an Infallible Church. As early as the February of 1661, Pepys expresses his disinclination that 'the Duke of York and his family should come to the throne, he being a professed friend to the Catholiques.' But for many years, and long after the time when it is known that he was a member of the Roman Church, James attended the ordinances of the Church of England and remained an ostensible Protestant. In January, 1669, the meeting took place at his house in which King Charles avowed himself a Roman Catholic, and professed a wish to establish

that religion in England. But it was not till 1672 that James omitted to take the Easter Sunday communion with the Anglican Church; he repeated this omission in 1673; and on the passing of the Test Act in the latter year, he resigned his public employments and avowed his religious opinions. The long delay in this disclosure of his conversion was probably due to the influence of Charles, who was greatly annoyed at his brother's ultimate avowal, which seriously compromised his own position, and overthrew any schemes of his own for a gradual preparation of the ground for a safe declaration of opinion on the part of both of them. But James, probably, entirely misapprehended the strength and significance of the popular sentiment on this point, and believed that a public avowal of their conversion by the members of the Royal Family would itself prepare the minds of the nation for a coming change in their own Established Religion. From this time, during the rest of the reign of his brother, he was a constant object of popular suspicion. His ability as well as his disposition for evil were exaggerated, and no efforts on his part to conciliate public opinion would have succeeded in disarming the prejudice against him. His own attempts to regain his former position were very unsuccessful. He never succeeded in persuading the Nonconformists that he was a lover of toleration, by his new-born sympathy with their disabilities and persecutions, and his overtures

to the popular leaders in Parliament to co-operate with them against Danby, which in his autobiographical memorials he falsely represents as overtures *to* him on their part, indignantly rejected by him, were, in fact, coldly received, and led to no results.

The adroit firmness of Charles rescued his brother from the impending blow of the Exclusion Bill; and once more, without any merit of his own, he resumed some degree of open authority in public affairs, and succeeded without opposition to the long-coveted Crown, which had at one time seemed hopelessly lost to him. I need not here repeat the well-known tale of his subsequent blunders. At the moment of his accession, and while still distrustful of the reality of his recognition by the nation, he promised everything in Church and State that the nation could desire, and showed a mild urbanity of manner which astonished and delighted his well-wishers among the Protestant Tories and High Churchmen. But as soon as he found himself popular, James relapsed into his arrogance and self-assumption, explained away his promises, and soon showed that in the intoxication of a momentary success he believed everything feasible that he himself wished, and the nation most detested. Minister succeeded minister in his counsels; measure succeeded measure in a rapid progression of arbitrary tendencies, and Anti-Protestant proceedings, until every man of influence

was alienated, and every moderate partisan was driven into open opposition. The unsuccessful risings of Monmouth and Argyll really accelerated the downfall of James, by increasing enormously his blind self-confidence. At last, a more formidable leader appeared for the nearly universal discontent in England and Scotland, in which latter country Nonconformity had learnt by bitter experience the justice of its former distrust of James's professions of toleration. English Nonconformity had been very imperfectly conciliated by the dangerous 'Indulgence,' under which lurked designs of a very different nature. Then James struck his last and, as it proved to him, his fatal blow at the Church of England, in the persons of some of her most influential prelates, and even of some of the most devoted of the advocates of the right divine of kings. On this came the expedition of William of Orange, and the sudden panic-stricken retractation by James of his madly rash measures. It was too late; and after a faint and ignominious struggle he left the shores of England to return thither no more; and after severe but decisive struggles in Scotland and Ireland, the legitimate line of the Stuarts ceased to reign over the Three Kingdoms.

To his downfall one of James's children had contributed through the person of her husband, while another had deserted him in the moment of his utmost need. The *rationale* of their conduct belongs

rather to subsequent papers in this series of Estimates. It is sufficient to say here that James was a fond father to his children when they were young, and that he always retained a certain sense of property in them, which approached, if it did not realise, the intensity of natural affection, though it did not prevent him from acting towards them on occasions in a manner which was somewhat inconsistent with that idea. As is well known, he was an uxorious but most unfaithful husband, his attachments to other women, which were very numerous, seeming to be, except perhaps in the case of Catherine Sedley, of a purely physical character. His choice of mistresses, however, seemed to be in general singularly independent of the common ideas of attraction, so that his witty brother used to conjecture that his ugly mistresses had been forced on him by his priests as a penance. But, in fact, his priests tried in vain to cheek this profligacy in their Royal convert. James was a devout Romanist, but an obstinate sinner, and with many promises and occasional penitence and remorse, he always relapsed into his evil ways. His sense of duty was in this case indeed feebler than in other ordinary matters. Everyone must admit that he had a far stronger sense of duty in general than his brother Charles, who can scarcely be said to have had any idea of duty, as such, at all. It was this which made James resolve on an open avowal of his religious principles; and

this again, no doubt, was a great inciting cause of his unlucky attempt to establish Romanism on the ruins of Protestantism after he became King. This feeling of duty and perception of the difference between right and wrong did not, it is true, prevent James from being occasionally a liar and a dissembler,—but in the main it lent to his character a certain weight which is its redeeming quality. If he was a dull bigot, he was certainly not a merely frivolous voluptuary. He had a purpose, and he endeavoured to carry it out with unfaltering pertinacity up to the fatal moment which disclosed to him the dangers of his position, and to the world his own want of presence of mind and of moral courage. His pursuit of a definite purpose gave him, as contemporaries have observed, the only intellectual advantage which he possessed over his able brother Charles. It is an unfortunate circumstance that it was also the main cause of his disastrous downfall.

The reputation of James would have been highest if he had been confined to the seclusion of private life; it would have been fairly good if he had been a permanent under-Secretary in a public office; it was very indifferent as a Statesman; it is calamitously evil as a Sovereign.

WILLIAM AND MARY.

THE general intellectual ability of William of Nassau, Prince of Orange, has never been questioned, nor the great influence which he exercised over the course of European as well as English affairs from the time when he first entered on the public arena. But a considerable difference of opinion exists as to the rank which should be assigned to him as an English Sovereign, not merely morally, but also intellectually. He was undoubtedly the originator and, during his lifetime, the very soul of that European combination which first checked Louis the Fourteenth in his progress towards an autocracy over Europe, and which, after William's own death, through the instrumentality of higher military ability than he possessed, completely destroyed the ascendancy of France. It is to his enterprise and firm judgment, far more than to any courage or capacity in Englishmen themselves, that we are indebted for the speedy and comparatively bloodless overthrow of all James Stuart's long-cherished and matured schemes for the destruction of the liberties of England. Yet, on the other hand,

there is scarcely a reign in our annals which is less satisfactory or agreeable than that of William the Third as an illustration of the relations between a king and his people, or a king who achieved less personal popularity than he did. The explanation of this seeming anomaly appears to lie partly in the peculiarities of his own character, and partly in the exceptional circumstances of his position.

In William the Third the wise discretion of his great-grandfather William 'the Silent,' the heroic leader of the Low Countries in their revolt against the oppression of Spain, appeared to be revived, but in a somewhat different and less favourable form. His early years had unfortunately been attended by circumstances which stiffened a naturally proud and reserved disposition into repelling coldness and brooding uncommunicativeness. His physical constitution, which is said to have been singularly poor-blooded, had no doubt something to do with this demeanour. But there was also a nervous irritability—usually displaying itself in a morose and sullen demeanour, or a rough and inconsiderate mode of expression, but sometimes surging up into violent explosions of passion—and there were an ardour and intemperance in his few but deep personal attachments, which show that the frozen surface of his nature was not incompatible with the existence underneath of the boiling springs of a deeply sensitive and passionate spirit. That the rough and seemingly unfeeling manner to which he

sometimes gave way, was not an index of a real want of warm feeling, or of his actual sentiments towards those to whom it was displayed, is evident from the fact that his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, and whose death nearly brought his own along with it, and for the time actually unhinged his mind, was yet the not unfrequent sufferer from these ebullitions. There can be little doubt, therefore, that these outbreaks were chiefly indications of physical disorder, and not necessarily connected with the essentials of his disposition. There was often in his bearing much of the frigid and forbidding haughtiness of his grandfather Charles the First, on occasions when his wishes were crossed and his prejudices and tastes offended; but just as he was much more honest than that King, so he could not, like him, assume, when it served his purpose and when his temper was under control, the winning yet stately condescension which has given a false varnish to Charles's manners as well as to his character in the eyes of posterity. At the same time, without the somewhat selfish ambition of his great-uncle Maurice, William the Third had much of Maurice's impatient sense of ability and desire of untrammelled command. With many of the qualifications of a military commander, he possessed also, what has been frequently found the great disqualification of military men for civil government, an impatience of the interference of private or popular feelings and interests with the execution of a care-

fully prepared and well-considered policy, and an inability to understand the motives and right of such interference, or to place themselves *en rapport* with such opponents. Like them he was too much disposed in his own heart to resent the expression of public opinion as a breach of discipline, and to view all men as if they had all subscribed the articles of Martial Law. With nothing of the self-centred ambition and heartlessness of the House of Stuart, William had in no slight degree that sense of a princely birth and its absolute rights which was so prominent a feature in both Stuarts and Tudors, and was the parent of the characteristic self-will of both families. William the Silent had loved civil freedom and constitutional forms of government in themselves, and was ever eager to preserve and assert them, even against his own family interests. But his great-grandson had seen civil virtues chiefly in the form of antagonism to himself, and an attempt to degrade him from his rightful position, and deprive him of his natural career in life; while, in the forms of constitutional government, he had been compelled, by the unhappy condition of his country, to recognise only hindrances in his plans for saving her from a foreign enemy and virtual auxiliaries to her national enslavement. There was another circumstance which disqualified the younger William from estimating constitutional matters in their true light. The first deliverer of the Dutch Provinces had had ample time

and opportunity, before he assumed the conduct of public affairs, to cultivate his mind carefully, and to gather up the lessons of ancient and modern history, in aid of a proper interpretation of men and institutions. But the second deliverer of the Provinces had but an imperfect and narrow education, and was left very much to gather his political philosophy from his own personal experiences. Such a training, while it may cultivate a greater self-reliance and self-possessed readiness, confines the materials of judgment to the narrow limits of personal circumstances, and tends to the identification of special and exceptional developments of political ideas with their necessary and essential characteristics. William must have always found it difficult to think of a watchful guardian of constitutional privileges without mixing him up with the memories of De Witt and the Anti-Orange party, or to estimate the motives of an economical obstruction to his plans for resisting the Dictator of Europe, without some tacit imputation of insane or treacherous indifference to national honour and safety.

And if this very limited and purely experimental education deferred and modified the general popularity which he ultimately achieved in the Dutch Confederation, still more would it operate disadvantageously in the case of England. It must be remembered that, from his first years of intelligence down to his expedition to England at the end of the year 1688, William had known that country only as

the England of Charles the Second and James the Second, and had based his estimate of Englishmen and English politics on the peculiar circumstances of that one period. ' Deeply interested, as from his near relation to the English Throne, as well as the weight attaching to the national power of England in the great European struggle, he necessarily was in all that went on on that side of the water, he was shut out by circumstances from any but the briefest and most imperfect opportunities of making himself acquainted with the rationale of English affairs and of Englishmen by personal observation. He had to rely for his information on diplomatic reports from the Dutch agents, or on the interested representations of English political exiles. Nor, as far as I can judge, had he any marked natural insight into character to enable him to dispense with a prolonged personal observation. If he never gave his unreserved confidence to persons unworthy of trust, the gap between this inner circle and the outer one of his general acquaintances was so great as to warrant the suspicion that he distrusted his own powers of insight too much to venture beyond the well assured ground of a long-testing experience. He was only too much justified by later events in his general distrust of English statesmen; but it was an unfortunate feeling to be entertained by a King of England, and as its result created a popular impression that, whatever

might be outward appearances, England, under him, was really governed by foreigners only.

William in his heart must have looked upon Englishmen generally as men not without strong opinions and prejudices, but too unprincipled and too changeable to be reliable agents in any great enterprise except when controlled within the strong grasp of a high-principled autocrat. On the Whigs, as allies in his European policy, he had but a very limited reliance; with the Whigs as professed patriots and constitutionalists he had no sympathies at all.

And such a type of character as that which he associated with Englishmen, was really repulsive to William. Though the school of diplomacy in which he had been trained had exercised a certain unfavourable influence on his own veracity and the spotlessness of his honour, yet he was substantially, and, for these days, distinctively an honest and honourable man, with whom honour and high principle were the most congenial policy. Not only Louis the Fourteenth, but his uncle, Charles the Second, tried in vain to tempt him from the perilous and, it seemed then, desperate path of honour in the defence of the United Provinces, by offers of safe though dishonourable authority and wealth. Burnet and the diplomatic correspondence quoted by Sir James Mackintosh in his 'History of the Revolution' inform us that Charles seized the occasion of his nephew's visit to England in October, 1670, when he was still a mere

lad, though already a recognised statesman, to sound him as to participation in his own infamous policy. 'All the Protestants,' said the King, 'are a factious body broken among themselves since they have been broken from the main stock. Look into these things better; do not be misled by your Dutch blockheads.' The advice was not taken, and Charles, in recording his failure to the French Ambassador, said, 'I am satisfied with the Prince's abilities, but I find him too zealous a Dutchman and a Protestant to be trusted with the secret.' In fact, it was this Protestantism of William's in its Calvinistic form which braced up his moral integrity on this and similar occasions, and nerved him to that undaunted perseverance which ultimately proved more than a match for the craft and resources of Louis and the genius of his marshals and statesmen. The Calvinistic system of theology, although, as in William's own case, it has not always proved a security against private immorality in its professors, has always been the guardian of public honour and national morality. The Dutch House of Orange were deeply imbued with this system, in the form in which it is held by thoughtful and strong men, and it was as an embodiment of its spirit, quite as much as through his individual self-reliance and natural abilities, that William the Third was enabled to conduct so long and so undespairingly, his very chequered contest with the power of France. So when he was himself the subject of

popular misrepresentation in England, his strong religious feeling made him write to his beloved Bentinck: 'I see in all this only a chastisement of Heaven, which blinds honest men, and permits the wicked to prosper in their designs.' There was much in this Calvinistic tone of religious thought which might under other circumstances have formed a strong bond between William and the people he was destined ultimately to govern. But the Calvinism of the Prince was cast in such a mould as belonged to a statesman and a man of European experience; while the Calvinism of England, which, in the person of the Protector Oliver, had presented an ideal, however imperfect, of a Christian governor, had degenerated, through the deteriorating influences of succeeding years, into a rabid antipathy to Romanism and a narrow Church creed. The Calvinistic William had not missed the lessons of Toleration which a European platform of action had impressed on his great namesake William the Silent, while Calvinistic England was much more busied in finding out inquisitorial tests and political disqualifications for avowed or concealed 'Papists and Socinians,' than in applying to the larger questions of the day the manly principles of public action and private self-respect which may be deduced from that emphatically personal religious system with which the name of Calvin has been associated. Thus, with similar religious dogmas, king and people had no common

religious field of action, and that which might have cemented their union, and covered a host of incongruities on other points, became practically only a source of discord. With an irreproachable orthodox system of divinity, William became in the eyes of the English zealots in practice little better than a Latitudinarian.

The point as to the sincerity and truthfulness of William's character is undoubtedly not one which can be settled quite satisfactorily, or without some reserve. His conduct during the reigns of his uncles Charles and James has been subjected to severe criticism, and he has been accused of playing a selfishly ambitious and double part. Without going so far as to acquit him of all underhand intrigue and dissimulation, I may say that, considering the extraordinary difficulties of his position as son-in-law to the heir to the Crown, and yet by his religious sympathies, if not by his political position, himself bound up with a cause to which his father-in-law had generally shown marked hostility, it tells in favour of the general truthfulness and honour of his character that, with the loose views then and still held respecting the moral canons of diplomacy, there should be so little evidence against him of positive falsehood. M. Grimblot, the editor of the 'Correspondence of William the Third and Louis the Fourteenth with their Ministers (1697 to 1700),' after contrasting the style of William's letters with

that of his great rival's, observes: 'But if we pass from the style to the kernel of the thought, the superiority ceases to be on the side of Louis the Fourteenth. In all their ruggedness the letters of William the Third have a stamp of honesty which we might seek for in vain in the grander despatches of his rival. It is the same with the proceedings of both.'

During the reign of Charles the Second it was the difficult part of William to endeavour to detach that king from a French alliance, by exhibiting himself in the most friendly light towards Charles personally, and yet at the same time not to alienate the Whig party in England, who on religious and political grounds were his natural allies. He had to humour the King's affection for the Duke of Monmouth by sedulous attentions to that prince in exile, and yet not to strengthen Monmouth's pretensions to the succession to the Crown, to the detriment of his own wife's right and prospects. He had, at the beginning of the succeeding reign, the still more difficult task of guarding against the ruin of the party which supported Monmouth's pretensions, and which formed an important and active element in the Protestant forces of England without aiding the Duke in the subversion of the throne of James. To have assisted Monmouth to his ends would have been suicidal on William's part, particularly at a time when William's own wife stood in the position of heiress to the Crown. The manner in which William endeavoured

to meet this dilemma seems to have been as follows. He complied at once with James' requests for the return of the Scotch and English regiments which were in the Dutch service, and he accompanied this compliance with a private offer through Bentinck, to come over himself and take a command in England against the Duke. Had he done so, he could by his influence have defeated the Duke's projects, and by the moral and material position he would thus acquire would have compelled the King to come to such terms with his subjects as might secure their liberties, and, without degrading the Crown, protect James against his own wilfulness. This the husband of the heiress to the Crown could alone do. It must be remembered also that, after becoming a pensioner of France, James had begun to exhibit airs of independence of the French King, which inspired hopes that he might be won over to the anti-Gallican alliance. If James then could be reconciled with the disaffected part of his subjects, there would be little danger of his being thrown back for support on the subsidies of France. But this loophole of escape from revolution was closed by James' non-acceptance of the offer of William. The fitting out of the expedition of Monmouth in a Dutch port might possibly have been prevented, notwithstanding the sympathies of Amsterdam with the Duke, if William had not desired to present to James the danger of his position in a tangible form. Its actual sailing

appears to have been the work of the authorities of Amsterdam, who besides their sympathies with Monmouth's cause, might well wish to set up a rival against the House of Orange, in the prospect of its succession to the Government of England. Probably William over-finessed in this instance, and the result of Sedgmoor fight, although he would gladly have prevented the conflict, must have been a real relief to him. But the conduct of James, intoxicated by his victory, and in his self-delusion identifying the abstinence of influential Englishmen from active support of the personal interests of Monmouth with an indifference to the cause under cover of which the Duke put forward those interests, became at last such that there seemed to be no alternative between a revolution which might ruin the prospects of the whole family, and the establishment of a despotic government in England, under the protectorate of France. The birth of a Prince of Wales, besides severing the immediate personal interests of James and William, seemed to shut out conclusively the future possible accession of England to the cause of European independence. Then, urged by every consideration that could move a statesman, William resolved to carry out his former idea in another shape, and as he could no longer save the King, to save his wife's rights, and protect Holland and Europe from a great impending danger.

The result of the expedition of William to England

was his election to the throne of that kingdom, nominally in conjunction with his wife, but with the sole administration of the Government in his own hands; and the new King found himself at once face to face with dangers and difficulties even greater than those which he had already successfully encountered. Independently of the disappointed reaction which is certain to follow such a great change, the perplexities which must attend the position and measures of any sovereign the basis of whose government is a successful revolution, must be always very considerable; for however much disposed he may be to respect and guard the liberties of his new subjects, he must necessarily be the organ of settled order and lawful authority, and the occasions are rare indeed on which he can escape from the autocratic associations of such an office, and become the embodiment and exponent of the sympathies and aspirations of the governed masses. He may temper and compose the spirit of irregular liberty, but in so doing he must frequently also curb and oppose it. On the other hand, the very men whose resistance to the fallen dynasty laid the foundations of his present authority are usually, by the traditions of their party principles, rather the natural guardians of the liberties of the subject than the champions of the Executive, however constitutional may be its course, just as the assertion of the Royal prerogative to some extent appears to be almost inseparable from the possession

of the Royal office. Both William and the Whig leaders were called upon to break with the Past and accommodate themselves as they best could to the awkward and anomalous conditions of the Present, and both were consequently always in an uneasy and ill-defined relation to one another, which could hardly fail, whatever might be the individual characters of the persons concerned, to produce embarrassment and discord. There was this additional complication, too, that William was more nearly bound up with the Whig party, by the fact that they had supported his personal pretensions to the Crown against the projects of the High Church and the Protestant Tories, which involved a Regency in the name of James, or the sole election of his wife to the throne. In William himself the love of power and impatience of external resistance to his plans, to which I have already adverted, and which must have always rendered it difficult for him to endure the criticism and delays of a popular system of government, were combined with a proud spirit which was always disposed to give way most when concession was asked rather than demanded, and optional instead of obligatory, and to comply and co-operate with those who had no ostensible claim on his compliance, rather than with those who might claim his favour by a sort of moral right. There can be little doubt that he fretted under the sense of owing his throne to any set of men, however eminent and

deserving, and felt a temptation to employ his scacely-reclaimed opponents in their stead, from the mere fact that with them he felt a greater freedom of will and action. This is probably the explanation of the calumnious reports spread against him by his enemies, and retailed in some of the gossiping and uncritical biographies of the present day, that he never forgave a personal service that had been rendered him, but always bore a grudge to his benefactor. The name of Bentinck is sufficient to refute this statement in the gross and injurious form in which it is usually presented, but it is probably so far true that William found it more easy to forgive an injury than to sustain the weight of a personal obligation.

Partly from some such considerations as those we have just referred to, partly from a higher conception of his duties as the King, not of one party but of a whole nation, William was led to employ men whose principles and whose antecedents and convictions were Tory, if not Jacobite. By several of these, as well as by not a few of those who boasted of the name of Whig, but had been disappointed, either personally or politically, in the results of the Revolution, William was betrayed in a greater or less degree—the treachery varying from a friendly and deprecatory correspondence with the exiled Court of St. Germains to a disclosure of projected enterprises of William's government, which involved a loss of the lives of Englishmen and a lowering of the national

honour. Can it be wondered at that, narrowed in his confidences by the uncompromising principles of a few and the treason of many, William fell back more and more on Holland and on Favouritism? The general national prejudice against Dutchmen, and the popular intolerance of the associations and friendships which he had formed under other circumstances, and which would naturally always be more to him than any mere English associations, seemed to William gross ingratitude on the part of those for whose deliverance he had done so much, and he felt authorised and even driven to protect, against the consequences of their invidious eminence, the future position of those who encountered with him the storm of popular dislike. The very sense that what he was doing was perilous to himself and prejudicial to his personal interests served only with a man of his temperament to render his proceedings more trenchant and reckless; and the disclosure of the enormous grants made out of the forfeited lands in Ireland and the Crown lands elsewhere to his favourites and his mistress, scandalised even those who had been the most uncompromising vindicators of his conduct. The dismissal of his Dutch Guards, which was wrung from him about the same time, if it showed a great want of consideration on the part of Englishmen for the feelings of one to whom they owed so much, and whose great merits they were compelled to admit, also demonstrated most pain-

fully a want of penetration as well as adroitness in William himself in dealing with National sentiment. But for this, the dismissal of the Guards would never have been demanded, or would have been volunteered by the King himself before the national desire assumed the form of a demand. But William laboured under the delusion that national confidence and sympathy could be commanded simply by the pursuit of a noble line of policy, and by a general regard to justice and legality. He never learnt how much more depends on a careful attention to little arts of personal demeanour, and on complaisance in trifles, and how by these social qualifications a bad man and an unprincipled king such as Charles the Second may be able to achieve a popularity which was denied to himself. He was too proud to bend his mind to such lower means of appealing to public sentiment, and he found some colour for his want of effort in this direction in his unfamiliarity with the English language, and his foreign education and tastes. He was, in fact, the Coriolanus of English Kings in this respect, and thoroughly despised popular judgment. Nor were his public services to Europe such as would recommend themselves immediately or forcibly to the popular English mind. To begin with, though an experienced General, William was not a successful one, and with consummate presence of mind and considerable military skill, he could lay no claim to the character of a great military genius.

His struggle against the power of France, though persistent, and in the end to a great degree successful, was not a brilliant one, and was marked rather by the capacity of retrieving military disasters, than of exciting the popular enthusiasm by great victories. His very courage, though heroic in fact, had nothing of the romantic in its fashion, and the romantic and sentimental, after all, have the most powerful hold, next to the religious, over the popular mind.

William's romance and William's sentiment were confined to and concentrated in two quarters—his few intimate friends and his wife. With the former his coldness and his formal reserve altogether disappeared, and he was the warm-hearted sympathiser and unceremonious companion. Here the rebound of his character took place, and carried him to an excess in a direction quite opposite to that of his ordinary self-restraint. Bentinck and Keppel, it is well known, held the highest places in his favour. The former commanded his deep esteem and confidence by his shrewd ability and entire devotion to William. The latter engaged his affections by his attractive personal manners and engaging qualities. Neither could disarm the national prejudice, and in the case of Bentinck it was as intense as indiscriminating. But Bentinck was a statesman—Keppel little more than an accomplished courtier. They repaid the King's favour by unwavering fidelity; but

they rendered his private life often very uncomfortable by their mutual jealousy.

William's relations with his wife were so peculiar that, even with our tolerably complete knowledge of the character of both husband and wife, it is difficult fully to realise them. Mary Stuart, or, as she may be more distinctively called, Mary of Orange, was one of those self-suppressed characters whose life is voluntarily sunk in that of another, and yet whose own personal features well deserve a separate recognition. Not possessed of commanding abilities, and, though lively and affable, with no pretensions to those brilliant drawing-room accomplishments which have made Frenchwomen the autocrats of a world of their own, Mary possessed that most valuable quality, thorough good sense, in its most refined and engaging form. Her perceptions were clear and generally correct, her power of discrimination was unusually keen, and her *reasonableness* was as marked as it is uncommon. But the great beauty of her character lay in the sweet and well-ordered harmony of her mind, in which there was room for no disorder, except when its serenity was ruffled by the outbreaks of one ruling passion,—her intense devotion to her husband, and resentment of any injury or affront to him. This feeling controlled every thought and regulated every word and act of Mary. Admiration, a sense of protection, and a self-identifying sympathy were the main ingredients of this womanly devotion.

The self-sacrifice tendered by such a nature was intelligent and unobtrusive, and before its influence the natural jealousies and most painful circumstances of their relative positions vanished. She convinced William that she had, with simple unconsciousness of any other possible course, renounced in his favour all the distinctive privileges and authority of her personal right to the Crown, and by her eager self-identification with his cause she guarded him against the self-reproach of having compelled her to sacrifice to him her secondary duties as a daughter. That she herself should escape reproach and calumny on this latter point was impossible, but when we remember the early age at which she lost sight of her father and became part of the life of her husband, and the little tenderness which was ever exhibited by that father towards her, and still less towards him in whom her very existence was wrapt up, we shall not be much inclined to estimate the offence against family ties very highly. That there always remained a respectful and kindly consideration for her father in his misfortunes and exile, Burnet and others who had personal opportunities of watching her closely strongly testify, and their evidence is confirmed by the unaffected testimony of her own pen. In one of her letters to William, written while the latter was on his Irish campaign, which have happily been preserved to us, there is a quiet reference to this mutually recognised feeling which speaks for itself.

In acknowledging the news of the battle of the Boyne Mary writes, 'He [Lord Nottingham] brought me your letter yesterday, and I could not hold, so he saw me cry, which I have hindered myself from before everybody till then that it was impossible; and this morning, when I heard the joyful news from Mr. Butler, I was in pain to know what was become of the late King, and durst not ask him; but when Lord Nottingham came, I did venture to do it, and I had the satisfaction to know he was safe. I know I need not beg you to let him be taken care of, for I am confident you will for your own sake; yet add that to all your kindness, and for my sake, let people know you would have no hurt come to his person. Forgive me this.' Her strange and seemingly unfeeling conduct when she first entered Whitehall Palace after the flight of James, is explained by Burnet on her own authority as a piece of overacting on her part, in consequence of an intimation from William, that if she seemed melancholy people would think she disapproved of his expedition. A passage in one of her letters to her husband seems to confirm this explanation:—'I never did anything without thinking: "Now it may be, you are in the greatest dangers, and yet I must see company upon my set days; I must play twice a week; nay, I must laugh and talk, tho' never so much against my will:" I believe I dissemble very ill to those who know me, at least 'tis a great constraint to myself, yet I must

endure it. All my motions are so wretched, and all I do so observed, that if I eat less, or speak less, or look more grave, all is lost in the opinion of the world; so that I have this misery added to that of your absence, and my fears of your dear person, that I must grin when my heart is ready to break, and talk when my heart is so oppressed I can scarce breathe.' On one point the devotion of the wife to the husband was sorely tried in the case of Mary, and her conduct here also has been looked upon as a proof of her coldness, if not coarseness of temperament. William, though in reality her passionate devotion to him scarcely surpassed his deep-rooted attachment to her, was an unfaithful husband, and though decorous in his indulgence in vice, did not conceal his faithlessness from his wife. As far as we know, she, true to her canon of never acknowledging to herself, or in the eyes of the world, an injury from her husband, ignored the matter, and tolerated the mistress in her train. Whatever she may have felt in her secret heart, Mary had obliterated from her canon all rights of her own as against her husband, and sensitive as her nature was in many points, it had also a certain matter-of-fact unsentimentality which permitted her to weigh in the balance conflicting feelings and duties where most women would have abandoned themselves unreservedly to natural impulses. If she complained to William, the public never heard the echo of her remonstrance; and she

combated the rival influences of mistress and favourites by a redoubled self-devotion to him, which was, there can be no doubt, one great ingredient in the bitterness of his agony when she was taken from him by death. The key, perhaps, to her passive endurance in this extreme case, and of her control of her natural emotion in the case of her filial responsibilities, lay in the fact that the faintness of her imaginativeness in comparison with her practical good sense, except where her husband's safety was concerned, prevented her from exaggerating to her own mind the gravity of this conflict of duties, and enabled her to decide on her proper line of action or inaction from a comparatively calm survey of actual facts. Her untutored piety taught her that there must be a right path which she might pursue, and having ascertained it to her own satisfaction, she performed her supposed duty without further misgivings, and perhaps even with little trouble of mind. William, who did justice to her high qualities, observed to Lord Shrewsbury when he left her as Regent during his absence, that she would know better how to suit the English people than he did; and the result proved the truth of his judgment, for the occasional glimpses which Englishmen had of the distinct regal personality of Mary, added to the popularity which her pleasing and courteous manners and her piety and charities as a woman had already secured, gave her

a hold on their affection and devotion which was never once shaken.

It would be doing injustice to the memory of William to estimate his humanity and clemency by such exceptional events as the massacre of Glencoe, which he certainly countenanced, if he did not expressly order it; or by his implacable resentment in the case of a few individuals, such as Sir John Fenwick. He was not in himself either bloodthirsty or revengeful; he again and again moderated the severity of victorious retribution, and there are few kings who have forgiven more often or more personal injuries than he. But where his judgment or prejudices decided that severity was the course demanded from him, the iron discipline to which he had subjected his own mind seemed to deaden for the time any perception of cruelty or feeling of compassion. The narrow and intolerant enthusiasm of one section of the Scotch people did not more offend his reason as a thinking man, than the ill-regulated *imperium in imperio* of the Clan system irritated and alarmed his sensibilities as a ruler. He saw in the bloody retribution at Glencoe a fortunate blow and a necessary warning to this insubordinate spirit, and with this consideration the actual slaughter affected him very faintly, even when pressed on his attention by public outcry. In the case of individuals, if he were not convinced in his mind that the individual was rather culpable than essentially criminal, he saw no

reason to interfere with the sword of justice, unless the individual and the occasion were alike unworthy of so grave an act. In his forgiveness he was just and magnanimous rather than generous and compassionate.

Perhaps, after all, the defect in William's nature, which lay at the bottom of his mal-adroitness in conciliating popular feeling, and of the unattractiveness of his demeanour, was his almost absolute want of the faculty of imagination. Every one has felt on a consideration of his character that, whatever its merits, it presented a most complete contrast to that of such a man as Sir Philip Sidney; and the contrast, if pushed into detail, would elucidate considerably the character of each. Sir Philip lived in an ideal world, apart from the hard and morally forbidding world of reality presented by that age, but which ideal world yet reflected a certain glow of external beauty and romance over even this hard reality. But beyond this his life was purposeless and disappointing. This is Chivalry in its very essence. William, though high-minded and armed with a noble purpose in life, was essentially unchivalrous. His energetic and unfaltering pursuit of a great end was not the realisation of an imaginative ideal, but an act of reason and duty and religious faith. Men and events presented themselves to his mind in their sober and unattractive reality. He could not conceive of and therefore was unable to appeal to that hidden world

of sentiment and undefined emotion which underlies not only the individual mind, but the self-consciousness of a nation, and which from time to time, by its intervention, confounds the most careful calculations of events. He appealed only to bare facts and to cold reason and stern duty, while the nation was longing for a trumpet-call, however wildly blown, which might summon it away from the lower calculations of worldly wisdom to the higher enthusiasm of emotional loyalty and patriotism. Mary possessed the instincts of a woman to supply partially the want of imagination which was common to herself and her husband. But in his masculine nature it was the source of much of that forbidding and sometimes almost brutal moroseness of demeanour which deprived him of the love of his people, though it could not wholly rob him of their scarcely self-acknowledged admiration and reliance. The same mental peculiarity which made him despise poetry and literature, which recognised the fine arts only in their stiffest and most realistic developments, which delighted in a stately uniformity of courts and walks and avenues, that left nothing to the imagination, and, like his own policy, was impressive rather than attractive to the common mind, crippled his endeavours to reconstitute English society and consolidate the English Constitution, and made him, with all his acknowledged merits, an unpopular king.

Yet with all his drawbacks, moral and intellectual, William was not only a high-minded and able statesman, but essentially a noble man. Insensibly, under the influence of his high purpose and persevering faith in its realisation, the general standard, as distinct from that of individuals and courtiers, was elevated from the degradation of the preceding period; and the first symptoms of a future amendment in political morals appeared in the attention excited by acts of corruption. Corruption was still dominant, but it was recognised in its true colours. There was great mismanagement in the processes of government, but the ends of the administration were no longer evil. There was still a struggle between Prerogative and Constitutional Rights, but it was a misunderstanding between purposes equally praiseworthy, and no longer a conflict against selfish misrule and a low-toned despotism. The Ruler was not loved, but he was respected; and if England was uneasy and dissatisfied at home, she had regained her natural weight in the scale of European nations. He who could achieve all this under such disadvantageous conditions, and in so brief a time, could not have been a bad man, and cannot be estimated as a wholly unsuccessful Ruler.

ANNE.

It is scarcely possible to conceive of a greater contrast in respect of greatness than that presented between the reign and the character of Anne Stuart. The reign, although it occupied but a small fractional part of the life of the Queen, was, in point of results, one of the most important in the annals of England, —the Queen, though she was one of the best-intentioned and most conscientious of our Sovereigns, was at the same time one of the least able and most common-place. Although her peculiarities and weaknesses really determined to a great degree not only the fate of the English Constitution, but the whole course of European events, she seems to us now in herself rather an accident than an essential part of her own reign. A youthful fancy, confirmed by habit, placed her at the almost absolute command of an able but rapacious and overbearing woman, and to the accident of this woman becoming the wife of John Churchill we owe nearly all of national greatness that is associated with the name of Queen

Anne. Had this imperious favourite not obtained this ascendancy over the mind of a weak Princess, the armies of England might never have been commanded by the great General who led them to victory, and the power of Louis the Fourteenth might have remained unbroken, or even have become still more paramount in Europe. So, had Sarah Jennings been as capable of retaining as she was of gaining an ascendancy over the mind of her royal mistress, the influence of France over the affairs of Europe might have been suspended for many years—even if that country itself should have escaped dismemberment—and the empire and resources of Spain might have been once more placed at the disposal of the House of Austria. Again, had not the sentiments of Marlborough's wife and the opportunities for a display of his military abilities afforded by the great European contest against the power of France gradually estranged his sympathies from the Tory party and its High-Church and Right-Divine associations, and drawn him towards the leaders of the Whig party, the fortune of whose cause hung on the issue of that European contest, Anne might have been left entirely to the impulses of her own religious and political predilections, and the Crown of Great Britain might have passed, either by substitution or succession, to the exiled but legitimate heir of the House of Stuart, to the entire exclusion of the Protestant House of

Hanover. England, in that case, might have been doomed to a repetition of the great Civil Wars of the preceding century and on an equal scale. On the other hand, had not the subtle and intriguing Harley succeeded in finding a suitable instrument for his purpose of undermining the position of Marlborough in the 'very humble' Abigail Hill (better known as Mrs. Masham), Anne might have never dared to rebel against the tyranny of the Duchess of Marlborough, and England might have taken the place of France as the arbiter of Europe, and in her turn provoked a hostile European coalition. As it was, Anne Stuart, herself deeply imbued with the principles of Right Divine, ascended the throne and remained upon it to the end of her life, to the exclusion of the legitimate heir; called to her counsels men whose principles she detested, and for whom she had no personal regard, and curtailed her reign of its growing European reputation and lowered for the time the position of England by what was certainly in itself an inglorious and discreditable pacification, though it may have really been a not unfortunate event for the more lasting interest of this country. From beginning to end, this Queen, with more marked political and religious preferences than the majority of our Princes, was almost a passive puppet of external circumstances, and a tool alternately of two parties, the principles of one of which outraged her most cherished feelings, and the designs of the

most efficient members of the other of which menaced the very existence of her royal authority.

As in the case of William the Third, no doubt, the anomalous position of Anne from her early years had a good deal to do with this strange paralysis of personal character; but, as in his case, the character itself had still more direct influence. Anne lost at an early age the support and guidance of a mother; and although we have no reason to suppose that the influence of Anne Hyde would have tended much to the elevation of her daughter's character, yet it might have absorbed, in a more wholesome manner, some of that excessive craving for sympathetic and reassuring friendship which the timid and helpless nature of Anne always exhibited, and which made her the slave of Sarah of Marlborough. The care and superintendence of an energetic stepmother might have prevented this ascendancy, but Mary of Modena, in addition to the disadvantages inseparable from this difficult position, was a Roman Catholic of a very extreme and bigoted type, while the only influence which shared the sway over the mind of Anne with friendship was a strong religious conviction. Fortunately for her ultimate chances of succession to the throne of England, Anne was educated by divines of the Anglican communion, and such a mind as hers became entirely subjugated by the system of High-Church Protestantism which recommended itself to her by proferring authorita-

tive guidance, while leaving her a nominal freedom. At the same time, it laid sufficient stress on the necessity of forms and ceremonies to present her religious duty to her in a concrete form, in which she might discharge it without much call upon her intellectual powers, or disturbing appeals to her moral consciousness. To the convictions thus early adopted Anne clung with the tenacity which is so often exhibited on one or two points by a mind which is in general irresolute and vacillating. It may seem strange that one with such views should have found a congenial associate in Lady Churchill, whose theological opinions were as openly latitudinarian as her character was unscrupulous. But this divergence between the friends was really one of the things which contributed to confirm the ascendancy of the favourite. Lady Churchill had from the first assumed the *rôle* of the candid friend who flatters not, and while she made this a pretext for allowing some part of her naturally domineering and insolent spirit to display itself openly in her demeanour towards Anne, she recommended herself to the confiding yet anxious and suspicious temperament of her mistress, by this apparent independence and honesty on such an important point of divergence. And perhaps, after all, Anne felt a little of the pleasure which very good people sometimes experience in thus indulging in a questionable and contraband enjoyment. Mary of Orange, who did not relish what she had seen and

heard of her sister's favourite, ventured to give her a warning, and Anne thus meets one of the charges against Lady Churchill:—'It is true she is not so strict as some are, nor does she keep such a bustle with Religion, which I confess, I think, is none the worse, for one sees so many saints mere devils, that if one be a good Christian, the less show one makes the better, in my opinion. Then, as for moral principles, it is impossible to have better, and without all that, lifting up of the hands and eyes, and often going to church, will prove but a very lame devotion.' There is an ingenuity and good sense in this plea, which, whether it represented Anne's deliberate sentiment, or was a mere passing expression inspired by her desire to excuse her anomalous friendship, satisfied Mary that the only way was to endeavour to influence her sister *through* Lady Churchill, whom from that time she tried to conciliate. The friends, in their joint pursuit of a perfectly candid friendship, had agreed to employ in their correspondence the more familiar names of 'Mrs. Morley' and 'Mrs. Freeman;' and one letter will suffice as an illustration of the terms on which they stood in the heyday of their attachment. Anne writes to her favourite,—'Dear Mrs. Freeman may easily imagine I cannot have much to say since I saw her. However, I must write two words; for though I believe she does not doubt of my constancy, seeing how base

'and false all the world is, I am of that temper, I think, I can never say enough to assure you of it. Therefore, give me leave to assure you they can never change me. And there is no misery I cannot readily resolve to suffer, rather than the thought of parting from you. And I do swear, I would sooner be torn in pieces than alter this my resolution. My dear Mrs. Freeman, I beg to hear from you.' A romantic 'eternal friendship' such as this, very common in the early annals of young ladies, has generally its euthanasia in the marriage of one of the contracting parties, but there was assuredly no romance in the marriage-lot of Anne to rival the claims of friendship. Charles the Second's witty saying as to the hopeless dulness of Prince George of Denmark is well known, and although Anne herself had no very fine intellectual susceptibilities to be outraged by this prosaic associate, she must have been devoid of all imagination and all youthful sentiment if she had not experienced some want of a familiar interchange of ideas with a rather more interesting companion than her husband. Thus the hopeless stolidity of Prince George was an invaluable auxiliary to the ambition of Sarah Churchill. That lady's brilliant and audacious qualities had indeed for Anne all the attractive piquancy of contrast to her husband's, as well as to her own, and until they assumed the form of exacting insolence and incessant jealous upbraiding,

they supplied to Anne's anxious aud timid nature all the pleasurable support and excitement of a stimulating drink.

Notwithstanding, however, what to some women would have been the intolerable companionship of such a husband as the one she was mated to, Anne was a happy as well as an affectionate wife, and a devoted, though most unfortunate mother. Child after child was born only to die in infancy or childhood. Here the character of Anne displayed itself to best advantage. Her naturally kind and affectionate heart made her feel keenly what her deep and unaffected piety enabled her to bear with touching resignation. On one occasion the deaths of two children came in the closest succession, and at a time when she was attending the sick-bed of her husband, and Lady Russell gives us a picture of the two parents which deserves a place by the side of the less respectful portraits which history has handed down to us of both in their public capacities. 'The good Princess,' she writes, 'has taken her chastisement heavily; the first relief of that sorrow proceeded from calming of a greater, the Prince being so ill of a fever. I never saw any relation more moving than that of seeing them together. Sometimes they wept, sometimes they mourned in words, and hand-in-hand,—he sick in bed, she the carefullest nurse to him that can be imagined.'

Her relations with her father and step-mother are

a less pleasing subject. James was one of those fathers who are profoundly convinced that an excessive indulgence to their children (especially when young) should command throughout life not only a gratitude corresponding in kind, but an absolute devotion in the most important matters. He seemed to expect that his eldest daughter, in the unbroken correspondence which he exacted from her until the Revolution severed them for ever, should write always with a sense of the paramount claims of a father over those of a husband. So with Anne, although he was himself sacrificing his family interests to his mistaken idea of his Religious duty, and his theory of the absolute authority of the Crown, he could not for a moment recognise the right of his daughter to obey the dictates of her religious convictions, which identified the success of his cause with the destruction of her own cherished Church. He could never see in her the duty-obeying woman, but only the ungrateful and unfilial child. Anne's motives in joining with her sister and brother-in-law against her father were, no doubt, mixed ones, in which duty only formed one ingredient. She had never been on pleasant terms of intimacy with her step-mother, and towards her father her feelings had, in consequence, even from a domestic point of view, become much diminished in warmth. The difficult problem of the duties of a father between the children of a former marriage and the wife of his subsequent choice was scarcely likely

to receive a satisfactory solution in the case of persons with the peculiarities and intellectual inferiority of James and Anne. James, like other fathers in a similar position, seems to have thought it the imperative duty of his children to fall in love with any woman he might himself prefer, and to continue undiminished towards himself that affection which, in the eyes of his children, he now bestowed on them in only a secondary degree. Mary of Modena, so far as we can trace her action, does not seem to have been a harsh or wilfully unjust step-mother, and appears, at any rate, to have sought to conciliate the affections of her step-daughter. But Anne, previously disposed to anticipate ill-treatment, under the influence of a nature especially sensitive on small points of ceremonial and observance, was only too ready to misconstrue the acts of the Queen, who, whether a judicious, was in this respect certainly not a successful, diplomatist. Anne revenged herself for supposed slights and ill-will by pouring out her complaints and innuendoes against her step-mother in letters to her sister Mary; and in these letters her father and his second wife figure under the unceremonious names of 'Mansel' and 'Mansel's wife.' Mary, however, as we learn from Anne's own complaint, would take no notice of these insinuations against the unwelcome relative, though she was almost as little inclined towards her as her sister, and had a keener sense of her dangerous influence over

James as an ardent Roman Catholic. Anne had evidently a certain pleasure in fancying herself a victim of domestic injustice, and it is ludicrous to read her expressions of surprise that she had not yet been persecuted for her religious belief, and her confident anticipations of the coming trial to her faith and constancy. The announcement of the probable birth of a child, which, should it prove a boy, would shut out both her sister and herself from the succession to the Crown, provoked the jealous suspicions of Anne to the utmost, and she had evidently made up her mind, under any circumstances, to disbelieve in a boy. The excessive jubilation of the Roman Catholic party at the event, and the great importance to their cause of such an occurrence at this crisis, were facts quite sufficient to carry conviction for the time to such a mind as that of Anne. Indeed, joined to other circumstances, they did the same to those whose intellects were better capable of estimating evidence, as well as to the great mass of the nation. At a subsequent period, indeed, these suspicions gave way before other and stronger feelings, and before she was called upon to ascend the throne herself, Anne had recognised in mind and in words the unlucky Roman Catholic heir as her true brother. At the crisis of the Revolution, however, she acted under the combined influence of a deep sense of her religious duty, of a strong prejudice against her stepmother, and of an angry belief that the rights of her

sister and herself had been outraged by an iniquitous *Popish* conspiracy.

There can be but little doubt that the influence of Sarah Churchill had been exerted to increase the bias of Anne against her step-mother, and to inflame her suspicions respecting her supposed brother. The same influence was from that time directed to the fostering of ill-will between the Princess and her sister and brother-in-law. The favourite thought her influence insecure if it were shared in any degree with another person, and demanded and long enforced a perfect monopoly not only of intimate friendship, but of ordinary friendly intercourse. She probably knew that Mary of Orange had endeavoured to warn Anne against her growing influence, and this she would never forgive, even had not the intellectual capacity of Mary herself rendered her a dangerous rival in the guidance of Anne. The unavowed but natural rivalry between William the Third and Marlborough added largely to the growth of an ill-will between their wives, each of whom was a most devout admirer of her husband's abilities, and equally jealous for his interests and reputation, though their conjugal devotion manifested itself in the one case in passive obedience, in the other in a shrewish tyranny. The baseness and treachery which were so strangely blended in Marlborough with such noble qualities brought on his public disgrace. Mary insisted on Anne abandoning the society of the wife of a man

thus situated. The best as well as the weakest parts of Anne's character were roused in opposition to such a demand, and the natural obstinacy of both sisters on certain points, increased perhaps by the knowledge of Anne's penitential communications with her father, rendered the breach almost if not quite irreparable. It is still a disputed point whether a reconciliation was effected when Queen Mary lay on her death-bed. The death of Mary, however, seems to have softened the heart of Anne towards her brother-in-law, and at the death of William she was on fairly good terms with him, and Marlborough had been pardoned his offences and restored to outward favour.

The accession of Anne herself to the throne placed her, as has been already said, in a most painful dilemma between conflicting views of duty. On the one hand, stood the rights of her now acknowledged brother, and her own theory of indefeasible hereditary right; on the other, her sense of duty to the Church of England, strengthened by her own antipathy to Roman Catholicism. The scale was turned against an abdication by the active opposition of Marlborough and his wife, and the persistent though passive resistance of George of Denmark, added to the Queen's own natural timidity. This last feature in her character had really great influence over the course of politics during her reign. It precipitated her first estrangement from the Tory chiefs

whom she had summoned to her counsels at her accession, but whose violent course with respect to the Nonconformists alarmed her as to a possible renewal of civil convulsions. The somewhat violent conduct of the Whigs, when in their turn they possessed the power, joined to the distrust which the Queen entertained of their attachment to the established Church, in some degree nerved her to the effort to shake off the yoke of the Duchess of Marlborough. The conduct of the favourite since the accession of her mistress to the throne had been almost incredibly foolish. She had always ruled over Anne by open dictation, but this had hitherto been blended with affectionate acknowledgment of favours, had respected outward appearances, and had not humiliated the Princess in the eyes of the public. But Sarah Churchill had indulged her own insolence of spirit so much that it was no longer under her own control, and instead of recognising in the change from Princess to Queen a reason for softening the tone of her dictation and relaxing her claim to a monopoly of confidence and favour, she sought to secure her power by increased and less guarded imperiousness, by additional exorbitancy of demands, and by a string of jealous and bitter reproaches which made her society and her letters a constant source of vexation and discomfort to the Queen instead of a pleasure and a support. She fell a victim at last to her own jealous selfishness. Fearing

the influence of any woman at all resembling herself in character, she placed near the Queen only those whose inferiority of intellect and seeming humility appeared to afford a guarantee against their becoming her rivals; but she never anticipated that to one who, like Anne, was thoroughly disgusted with the opposite qualities as exemplified in the Duchess herself, these signs of a gentler and less powerful character would have an especial attraction. For a long time, however, Anne dared only intrigue secretly against her haughty tyrant, and even when the breach was a declared one, she encountered the remonstrances of the fallen favourite with the defensive attitude of dogged sullenness. The following description of a scene between the Queen and the Duchess, though it may have been somewhat embellished by the witty malignity of the latter, is probably substantially a faithful picture, and is too characteristic to be omitted:—

Upon the 6th of April, 1710, I followed my letter to Kensington, so soon that Her Majesty could not write another harsh letter, which I found she intended. I sent a page of the backstairs to acquaint Her Majesty that I was there. She was alone; however, the man stayed longer than was usual upon such occasions, and then told me the Queen would have me come in. As soon as I opened the door, she said she was going to write to me. 'Upon what, Madam?' said I.

The Queen—'I did not open your letter till just now, and I was going to write to you.'

Lady Marlborough—'Was there anything in it, Madam, that you had a mind to answer?'

The Queen—'I think there is nothing you can have to say, but you can write it.'

Lady Marlborough—'Won't your Majesty give me leave to tell it you?'

The Queen—'Whatever you have to say you may write it.'

Lady Marlborough—'Indeed, I can't tell how to put such sort of things into writing.'

The Queen—'You may put it into writing.'

Lady Marlborough—'Won't your Majesty allow me to tell it you, now I am here?'

The Queen—'You may put it into writing.'

Lady Marlborough—'I believe your Majesty never did so hard thing to anybody as to refuse to hear them speak, even the meanest person that ever desired it.'

The Queen—'Yes, I do bid people put what they have to say in writing, when I have a mind to it.'

Lady Marlborough—'I have nothing to say, Madam, upon the subject that is so uneasy to you; that person is not, that I know of, at all concerned in the account that I would give you, which I can't be quiet till I have told you.'

The Queen—'You may put it into writing.'

After a long expostulatory monologue from the Duchess, the Queen retires towards the door returning no answers to the impassioned appeals of the Duchess but the following:—'You said you desire no answer, and I shall give you none.' 'I will go out of the room.' 'You said you desire no answer, and I shall give you none.' And so the interview comes to an end.

Once emancipated from her bondage to the Duchess of Marlborough, the Queen was determined never again to be the passive tool of any of her servants, and her mode of asserting her independence illustrates well the inferiority of her intellect. Incapable, really, of judging on the most serious matters, and self-distrustful on nearly all matters, she could not or did

not venture to discuss them with her advisers on the basis of a rational argument, but met them all alike with uniform objection and delay. Swift tells us that 'the Queen grew so jealous upon the change of her servants, that often, from the fear of being imposed on and over-caution, she would impose upon herself. She took a delight in refusing those who were thought to have had the greatest power with her, even in the most reasonable things, nor would she let them be done until she fell into the humour of it herself.' . . . . . 'When a person happened to be recommended to her as useful for her service or proper to be obliged, perhaps, after a long delay, she would consent; but if the treasurer offered at the same time a warrant or other instrument to her, already prepared, in order to be signed, because he presumed on her consent beforehand, she would not; and thus the affair would sometimes be for several weeks together, although the thing were ever so reasonable, or that even the public suffered by the delay.' The same writer intimates that this curious mode of self-assertion on the part of the Queen had the important result of baffling the plans of those among her ministers who were anxious to pave the way by preparatory measures for the succession of the 'Chevalier de St. George,' as the legitimate Stuart Prince was styled. The hesitation and delays of Anne left them at her death unorganised and helpless spectators of the rapid and determined measures of

their political opponents for the peaceful proclamation and acknowledgment of George of Hanover. In this particular case, the Queen's humour was strengthened by her natural timidity, which led her to shrink from committing herself to any decided step in favour of her brother. To this was added the dislike entertained by herself, in common with many sovereigns, to the presence and public recognition of successor. Both the Protestant Tory party and the Whigs had in turn experienced her grave displeasure at a proposal that the Electoral family should be invited to England; and, in the case of the Chevalier, Anne could not free her mind from the additional terror that his presence in the United Kingdom might be speedily followed by her own deposition in his favour. She could not be blind to the fact that a recognition of his claims to the throne in any form, however contingent, implied a confession of usurpation on her part which must seriously undermine her authority.

The portrait which I have endeavoured to draw, as must be evident, is rather that of a somewhat common-place private individual than of a sovereign. Yet Anne had in public, at any rate, the external bearing of a queen, and she possessed one or two truly queenly qualities, which raise her memory above entire contempt. She had a high idea of the dignity of the royal position, and an even exaggerated sense of the importance of State ceremonial and the stage

effects of Royalty. Her countenance, though heavy and devoid of the charm of intelligence, was comely and even impressive from its repose. Her expression as well as her demeanour, in public, was generally pleasing and gracious. But she had ideas of Royalty which went beyond mere ceremonial demeanour. Her sense of duty, though narrow, was strong; and she had a real affection for her subjects as such, and an unselfish desire to promote their happiness, which could not fail to call forth a corresponding feeling of attachment and love on their part. This feeling was well expressed, as in the case of Wordsworth's 'Shepherd Lord,' in the title of '*Good* Queen Anne,' by which she was popularly known. In the reigns of her successors her memory retained its hold over the popular sympathies, and her kindly and charitable disposition was looked back to with fond regret. Anne was selfish only in trifles, in great matters she was generous and self-sacrificing. Her munificence and her private as well as her public charities were truly Royal. Her attachment to the Church of England was with her more than a mere article of faith, and received strong practical exemplification in her sacrifice of the First Fruits, and in the fund for the endowment of the poorer clergy, which is still known as "Queen Anne's Bounty.' If she was occasionally petulant and acrimonious, this want of amiability proceeded from inferiority of mind rather than from natural disposition.

Her true nature, if dull and incapable of the higher moods of feeling, was gentle and inoffensive. Her judgment was often distorted by prejudice, under the influence of which she became anxiously suspicious, while in some instances she showed an unforgiving temper and an implacable resentment. But she was in general long-suffering and considerate, and her bitterest resentments were free from vindictiveness. She could be generous even in her hatred, as her undeserved bounty to the Duchess of Marlborough after the disgrace of that favourite sufficiently testifies. Perhaps, if we consider the beneficial influence over the mind of a nation of a really good though weak character in the prominent situation of sovereign, we may feel that we have undervalued the significance of Anne's personal qualities, and assigned her a lower place among our Sovereigns than is warranted in fact. But however we may congratulate ourselves on the fortunate manner in which events actually developed themselves, notwithstanding her feebleness of mind and her peculiar prejudices, it is impossible to shut our eyes to what might have been the consequences of this dangerous weakness; and while we are willing to acquiesce in the contemporary verdict which affirmed her essential goodness, we are compelled to deny altogether in her case any claim to the rank of a *great* sovereign.

GEORGE THE FIRST.

LORD STANHOPE introduces his notice of the reign of George the First with the following remark:—'A hard fate that the enthronement of a stranger should have been the only means to secure our liberties and laws! Almost a century of foreign masters! Such has been the indirect, but the undoubted effect of the Great Rebellion. Charles and James, driven abroad by the tumults at home, received a French education and pursued a French policy. Their Government was overthrown by a Dutchman; George the First and George the Second were entirely German; and thus, from 1660 to 1760, when a truly English monarch once more ascended the throne, the reign of Queen Anne appears the only exception to a foreign dominion.' The foreign birth and feelings of the first two Georges presented themselves to the mind of the greatest of English satirists of the present age in a somewhat different point of view. 'It was lucky for us,' says Mr. Thackeray, 'that our first Georges were not more high-minded men; especially fortunate that they loved Hanover so much as

to leave England to have her own way. Our chief troubles began when we got a king who gloried in the name of Briton, and being born in the country, proposed to rule it. He was no more fit to govern England than his grandfather and great-grandfather, who did not try. It was righting itself during their occupation. The dangerous, noble old spirit of Cavalier loyalty was dying out; the stately old English High Church was emptying itself; the questions dropping which, on one side and the other—the side of loyalty, prerogative, Church and King: the side of right, truth, civil and religious freedom—had set generations of brave men in arms. By the time when George the Third came to the throne the combat between loyalty and liberty was come to an end, and Charles Edward, old, tipsy, and childless, was dying in Italy.' There is much truth in both these views of the position, though I can hardly acquiesce unreservedly in either. It by no means follows that had the House of Stuart escaped its first exile, the *English* character of the Monarchy would have been secured in anything but the mere name. Charles the Second, in accordance with his father's marriage-articles, would have been placed for education at an early age in the hands of his French mother and her foreign priests and French-ified counsellors at Court; the influence of France, not only of her policy, but of her social habits and national stamp, would have shaped the future not

only of the King, but of the people of England, and a divergence of sentiment between the two would have been avoided, not by the King being more English, but by the nation becoming more French. From this, at any rate, with its probable consequences, the 'Great Rebellion' saved us; and while the nationalism of the dynasty was suspended for a century, the continuity of English feelings in the nation remained unbroken. On the other hand, it can only be looked upon as a poor consolation that a civil conflict between King and People was avoided during the reigns of the two first princes of the House of Hanover only by the absence of a common interest.

But whatever may be our judgment as to the national gain or loss involved in the accession of the House of Hanover, there can be no doubt as to the very trying and invidious position which that family was called upon to occupy in ascending the Throne of England.

To begin with, its connection with the dynasty which it succeeded was too remote to exercise any perceptible influence on the sympathies of the nation. The associations in the English popular mind which had, in the early part of the seventeenth century, gathered round the name and cause of the beautiful Queen of Bohemia—the representative of the Protestant cause on the Continent of Europe—had been much weakened by the more recent memories of her younger sons Rupert and Maurice; nor had the

conduct of their elder brother Charles been such as to remove the prejudice thus engendered. The Englishmen of the early part of the eighteenth century were called upon to renew, if they could, these faded impressions of an old attachment in favour of the son of the youngest sister of these Princes of the Civil War period, a man of fifty-four years of age, who had not visited England since the reign of Charles the Second; whose father, whose education, whose associates, and whose habits were all German, who could not speak English, and who, if he understood anything of English politics was entirely ignorant of English feelings and modes of thought. Nor was there anything in his previous career, as there was in that of William the Third, to command the admiration of Englishmen, in default of their affections. He had been merely known as a petty electoral prince, whose only public appearances, in the European contest against Louis the Fourteenth, had indicated his courage and sense of honour rather than his capacity. William—if a foreigner and unpopular himself—had at his side a devoted wife, who was both English and popular, and who seemed to continue rather than to break the dynastic associations of Englishmen. But Sophia of Hanover, the mother of George the First, was almost as completely a foreigner in habits and feelings as himself; and if she had achieved a European reputation as a highly accomplished woman, and a liberal and wise patron

of learned men, seemed from her advanced age a relic of the past rather than a hope of the future. Nor, while herself both a statesman and a scholar, did she take common pains to give her son a decent education. In short, George the First landed in this country as its recognised King, deficient in almost every qualification which could recommend him prospectively to the sympathies of his new subjects. Nor were his own prepossessions with respect to them more favourable. His only personal experiences of England had been gathered during the most profligate and corrupt period of English history, and his more mature impressions of English principles and honour had been drawn from his experiences of such men as Churchill and Harley. Can it be wondered at that George of Hanover received the news of his accession to the English Crown without any manifestation of pleasure, and showed little alacrity in seeking the shores of a country of whose inhabitants he had so indifferent an opinion, and which, he had reason to believe, welcomed him only as a necessary *pis-aller*, and from a cold calculation of its own interest alone, without the smallest consideration for his personal predilections? This relative position of King and People at the accession of the House of Hanover must be borne in mind, if we would judge fairly of the conduct of both during the years that followed. But for this, on the one hand, the King might appear to be inexcusably wrapt up in his own

personal preferences for Hanover, and ungratefully blind to his responsibilities as King of England; and, on the other hand, the English nation might be justly subject to a charge of indifference to their own cause and failure of duty to one who had assumed his difficult position only at their express call. As it was, neither King nor People can escape from just blame for their respective conduct, but this conduct is explained, and the blame to some degree lightened by the complete want of mutual sympathy. The character, indeed, of George would have been a very exceptional one, and he would have been peculiarly happy in the qualities of his mind, if he had overcome the inherent difficulties of his position, and obtained the hearts instead of merely the sufferance of his English subjects. But such was not the case.

George Louis, Elector of Hanover, or (more correctly) of Brunswick and Lüneburg, was the representative of a branch of the Guelph family, which had already blended with the royal blood of England by the marriage of Henry the Lion with Matilda, daughter of Henry the Second of England. So far as blood, therefore, was concerned, he represented on his father's as well as on his mother's side both the Norman and Saxon royal families of this country. He was born at Hanover on the 28th of May, 1660—the day before Charles the Second made his triumphal entry into London at the Restoration—significant dates in the history of the fortunes of the elder line

of the House of Stuart. His subsequent visit to England is said to have been connected with some project for marrying him to the Princess Anne, whose successor he was destined to become, instead of her husband. He was actually married to his cousin Sophia Dorothea of Zell, a match, it would seem, in which the inclinations of both bridegroom and bride were sacrificed to considerations of family policy. Sophia Dorothea appears to have been a volatile, excitable woman, of small principle and strong passions. These she indulged, there can be little reasonable doubt, criminally with an early favourite, the unprincipled adventurer, Count Philip von Königsmarck, whose elder brother had become notorious in England for the murder of Mr. Thynne. The intrigue was detected—through the jealousy of a mistress of Königsmarck—by the Elector Ernest Augustus, father of George, during his son's absence from Hanover; and the assassination of Königsmarck, and the imprisonment of Sophia Dorothea which followed, were the acts of the old Elector alone, though the restraint to which his wife was subjected was continued by George after his accession to the Electorate. His wife's flighty and violent disposition had long disgusted him with her, and he had no sentiment in him to mitigate his sense of justice. There appear to have been at least two types of character in the House of Brunswick—both strongly marked, and alternating in the members of the

family. The one was a gay, jovial, somewhat boisterous, but affable and genial temperament, much liked, but little respected and little trustworthy. To this type the father of George approximated. Had he, instead of his son, been the Parliamentary heir to the English Crown, he would probably have misgoverned England not a little, and been a reckless waster of her wealth, but infinitely more popular than either of the first two Georges. The other type was that of a quiet, precise, frugal, and homely disposition, with a strong sense of duty, a strict regard for truth, and a tendency to the insufferable martinet. To this latter type the character of George the First was assimilated. Self-will was the salient point of the former type—obstinacy of the latter. Thoughtless injustice was the besetting failing of the one, —cold and rigid justice carried to the verge (if not beyond) of brutality the accompaniment of the other. The less the truth was known about the one the more it was liked; the less the other was really known the more it was disliked. The one inspired incautious sympathy, the other extorted unwilling respect. George the First had a clear head, and even a strong head within the range to which his mental capacity limited his powers of observation and decision. He was an extremely well-intentioned man within the compass of his idea of his duty. He was an excellent man of business also on the same scale and under the same conditions. The same was true of his ideas of

justice and clemency; there was no feeling of revenge about the one or of generosity about the other. The range of his understanding was very limited. His mind was thoroughly unanalytical in its reasoning; he saw everything in its simple concrete form.. He was a true pre-Raffaellite in the absence of atmosphere and visual proportion in the pictures which he drew in his own mind of men and things; he hated such and such men and such and such things—he strongly preferred such and such others. Their respective greatness or insignificance made no difference in the intensity of his feelings. Habit had over such a character immense influence. The unaccustomed freshness of the English oysters afflicted him, perhaps, quite as much as the unaccustomed forms of English loyalty and disloyalty. His ways were those of a man of habit, crystallised by a life of half a century. Both the peculiar virtues and peculiar vices of the English people were strange to him and incomprehensible. Yet he had no irritable desire to reform them to his own esteemed pattern; he felt it no part of his duty to turn England into a Hanover. All that he wanted to do was to perform such functions of government as were considered essential to the position of King of England, which he had undertaken; and in other respects to see and know as little of England and the English as possible, and get away from England to Hanover whenever he could find a legitimate excuse. He acquiesced in most of the

measures submitted to his approbation by the Walpoles and Townshends and Stanhopes, who, he thought, had the most common sense and the best apology for principle among English statesmen; but he did so in the spirit of one who sees no particular harm in a suggestion made by others better acquainted with the subject-matter, rather than of one who is sufficiently interested to give the matter much thought. He initiated nothing himself except where the interests or supposed interests of Hanover were concerned. On that subject he had a strong opinion, and was almost immovably obstinate in his adherence to it. In other things he was an intelligent and well-meaning *roi fainéant*. His original choice of the Whig statesmen had been based partly on his knowledge of them, gained during the various negotiations while he was still in Hanover, partly on his deep conviction that had it not been for the exertions of them and of their party, he would still have been merely Elector of Hanover. And little as he cared for England in itself, he had a sense of property in his succession to its Crown which equalled in tenacity the most intense theory of right-divine. No Norman and no Plantagenet could have kept a closer grip (in reality) on the sceptre of England, and no Anglo-Saxon could have displayed the strength of immobility more clearly than the first two Georges. This resolution not to be expelled, coupled oddly with a strong desire to go, would probably have sustained

the first George on the throne, even had Mar and Derwentwater's enterprises become much more formidable than they did, as it alone kept the second George on his throne when Charles Edward reached Derby.

The temperament of George the First, as I have already intimated, was phlegmatic. His temper was generally calm and equable, but his occasional fits of passion were in proportion violent and ungovernable. Without being naturally implacable, he required to have a good reason given for forgiving any one, just as he believed it impossible any one could have become obnoxious to him without real provocation received. One of his least reputable quarrels was with his own son, George Augustus, Prince of Wales, not very long after his own accession to the English Crown. The ostensible cause of the quarrel was trivial enough; probably the seeds of estrangement had been sown for some time. Jealousy of the comparative popularity of his son in England during his Regency for his father may have contributed to the breach; and possibly the recollection that he was Sophia Dorothea's son, who was keen in defending his mother's reputation, may have inspired distrust. During the continuance of the quarrel the conduct of neither father nor son was very seemly; but at length, in 1720, through the mediation of counsellors and friends, the breach was at least outwardly healed; all England took the opportunity of getting drunk—for

joy; and the officers of the two Courts, according to one of the contemporary newspapers, publicly 'kissed, embraced, and congratulated one another upon this auspicious reconciliation.'

The features of King George were heavy and rather uninteresting, but not unintelligent—the intelligence of a shrewd but narrow-minded cynic. He had little dignity either in his person or bearing, and his dislike of display and public ceremonial did much to impair his popularity. He had been a kind, considerate ruler in Hanover, and was much beloved and respected by all classes in that part of his dominions; but though he wished well to the English people, he neither understood nor liked them, and sought refuge from them in the society of Germans of a low social class and tastes. The proportion which the grossness of the tastes and habits which George brought with him from Hanover bore to that which was sanctioned by the contemporary standard of English society has probably been somewhat exaggerated by writers of the present day. The society was not very refined which produced and tolerated the writings of Swift. The French varnish indeed under which vice appeared in the reign of Charles the Second had worn off, and they who were accustomed to what was talked and done in England in 'good society' during the reigns of William and Anne had little pretence for lifting up their hands and eyes at the grossness of George of Hanover and

his courtiers. But it is the characteristic of all social offenders to hate exaggerations of their own offences, and the somewhat coarser daub presented by the foreign artist offended the moral æstheticism of the English fine-gentleman. The conventional reticences and proprieties were not the same in the two countries, and a transgression on such a point as this was more keenly felt than the substantial delinquency. George had the conventional morality as well as the conventional ideas of good-breeding of his own country. The Hanoverian Court version of the commandments agreed pretty much with that which had been long established in England, in viewing with indulgence the sins of seduction and adultery in its princes and great men; but then George brought over to England two foreign mistresses, one of whom was uncomely in English eyes for her height, and the other for her breadth, and both of whom loved the English money of their royal patron as if they had had a right to it as English women. So both they and their patron were ridiculed and hated and vilified by the advocates of legitimate English immorality. In truth, the conduct and Courts of the first Georges may have fostered the grossness of English society, but they certainly did not originate it.

Some qualities at least George the First had which recommend him to our respect as an English Sovereign. He desired to do justice, he kept his word

sacredly, he had unquestionable physical courage, and he was morally brave so far as his lights allowed him to see wherein moral courage lay. If his understanding was limited and his education sadly deficient, he had the sense to choose able and well-meaning councillors, and wisdom enough to seek their advice, and generally to act on it when given. If he was but an indifferent Christian he was at any rate an honest King.

GEORGE THE SECOND.

If it was the fate of George the First to attach to his person few, if any, warm admirers among his English subjects, it was the misfortune of his son and successor—George Aūgustus—to evoke an amount of personal animosity which renders it difficult in the present day to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion respecting his character. That personal ill-feeling and personal resentment have much to do with most of the estimates of him which are preserved in the memoir-writers of the period is evident, if only from the fact that these accounts are so often self-inconsistent and incapable of being blended into an harmonious whole. Nor is the character of any one of the three chief authorities for the ordinary estimates of George the Second such as to induce us to place much reliance on their unsupported statements, or the judgments which they chose to pass upon their contemporaries. All three were shrewd men of the world and clever delineators of men and manners, and as such possess a certain value as historical witnesses; but all three were also men of strong

prejudices, and rather lax ideas as to the boundaries of truth and falsehood. Horace Walpole is known to everyone as the ideal of a thorough-paced gossip, with whom the goodness of a story is the first and main point, and its truth a very secondary consideration, and who would never scruple for a moment to colour or even invent where his prejudices prompted, or the completeness of the story seemed to call for the addition. The celebrated Lord Chesterfield, who had been a star in the firmament of Leicester House when George the Second was himself Prince of Wales and the centre of an Opposition Court, and who again for a time filled a similar position in the Court of Frederick, the succeeding Prince of Wales, has left us a 'Character' of his earlier patron which, on the whole, is more candid than could have been expected, though the *animus* of the writer peeps forth unmistakably in some of the paragraphs. But Lord Hervey, his contemporary and rival, warns us against placing trust in Chesterfield, whom he describes as utterly unscrupulous in his statements, and constantly sacrificing truth to epigrammatic effect. As to Lord Hervey himself, he has painted his own character in unmistakable colours in his 'Memoirs of the Reign of George the Second;' and Mr. Thackeray expresses in strong terms the horror with which this self-portraiture filled his mind. We cannot be too much on our guard against assuming as correct the characters drawn by men so brilliant and so little

fettered by conscientious scruples as these were, and it is better to be contented with the more trustworthy hints of a much better man, though less pointed writer, Earl Waldegrave, and with tamer deductions from established facts, than to give a false interest to this sketch by adopting these clever but doubtful representations.

The present Lord Stanhope pronounces George the Second to have been inferior to his father in intellect, but Lord Chesterfield's remark seems to bring us nearer to the truth:—'He had not better parts than his father, but much stronger animal spirits, which made him produce and communicate himself more.' Neither father nor son can justly lay claim to more than a very moderate amount of ability, but the range of George the Second's mind was much greater than his father's, and if he judged less soberly and soundly in some respects than the phlegmatic and precise George Louis did within his narrower sphere of thought, he entertained much more readily the possibility of outlying considerations beyond the boundaries of his own personal experience, and took an interest in a much greater number of things in which other people than himself were interested. But this very circumstance was disadvantageous to George the Second in any public comparison between his ability and that of his father, for the wider the area over which the sympathies of the former extended, and the greater and the more diversified the

objects on which his intellectual abilities were exercised, the more apparent became the poorness of those abilities, and the more salient any peculiarities of manner and disposition. The greater reserve of George the First also (however unpleasing and unpopular in itself) had not been without its effect in preventing the extent of his intellectual incapacity from being gauged. A silent man has always great advantages in this respect over a man of familiar and more communicative temperament. Not only does he *not* expose himself, but he is credited with a *positive* amount of wisdom to which he is really quite unentitled. But in George the Second the nature of his father had been materially modified by the irritable and impulsive temperament of his mother. He resembled his father, indeed, in his excellent business habits, his methodical arrangement of his time, and in that subservience to the force of habit which made Lord Hervey say of him that 'he seemed to think his having done a thing to-day an unanswerable reason for his doing it to-morrow.' Like his father, he was thoroughly right-minded in his intentions with respect to both the public and individuals. Lord Chesterfield admits that 'his first natural movements were always on the side of justice and truth,' though he avers 'they were often warped by ministerial influence, or the secret twitches of avarice.' The former of these limitations, of course, simply means that he some-

times followed the counsels of his constitutional advisers instead of those of Lord Chesterfield. This writer adds that George 'was generally reckoned ill-natured, which indeed he was not. He had rather an unfeeling than a bad heart; but I never observed any settled malevolence in him, though his sudden passions, which were frequent, made him say things which in cooler moments he would not have executed. His heart always seemed to me to be in a state of perfect neutrality between hardness and tenderness.' There was equal courage in both the Georges, equal presence of mind in the face of great dangers, and a similar natural steadiness and pertinacity of purpose. But there were also marked differences between father and son. The mind of George the First was habitually at rest, and his passions usually completely under his control; the mind of George the Second was always restless in a greater or less degree, and his passions at the mercy of every passing occurrence, however trivial. Though he thought much more about great things than his father, he was much more disturbed about little matters. This, Lord Chesterfield asserts, he was told by the King himself, and he confirms it by his own observation. 'I have often,' he says, 'seen him put so much out of humour at his private levée by a mistake or blunder of a *valet de chambre*, that the gaping crowd admitted to his public levée

have, from his looks and silence, concluded that he had just received some dreadful news.'

His avarice, which is often spoken of by contemporaries, seems to have been due to the same cause. He was naturally economical, and he felt with disproportionate keenness all the smaller demands on his pocket, and especially resented any unusual or extraordinary appeals to his bounty. He had no idea of any additional claim upon his generosity, on the ground of his royal position. He acted in the spirit of a trustee whose accounts had to be audited in chancery. Yet his love of saving never stood in the way of what he himself believed to be a duty to himself or the country; and to secure the success of what he considered a true and necessary public policy he was even reckless in his expenditure. Under this very parsimonious sovereign the National Debt was considerably more than doubled, and the annual parliamentary grant rose from three and a half millions to nineteen. And this was nearly all public expenditure. The King's private expenditure was regulated by strict economy, and his mode of living was simple and frugal in the extreme. There was much plundering, no doubt, by ministers and courtiers, and a considerable sum was spent in governing by corruption; but the great increase arose from the natural ambition and enterprise of the King in his foreign policy. He was no doubt, to some extent, influenced in this policy by his

interest in the fortunes and position of Hanover, his love for which principality was scarcely, if at all, inferior to that of his father. But his favourite schemes embraced far wider considerations, and tended to much more serious entanglement in the general affairs of the Continent than were demanded by his interests as Elector of Hanover alone. He was always too much in earnest and too eager about everything which he undertook to confine himself within any such limits. It tasked all the sagacity and adroitness of Robert Walpole to impose his let-alone, spend-at-home policy on the eager spirit of his Royal master; the more warlike and enterprising spirit of Carteret always carried with it the King's avowed or secret sympathies; and notwithstanding a great divergence in their estimate of the importance of Hanoverian interests, the daring policy of the elder Pitt was much more in unison with the King's own bent of mind than the cautious, unenterprising counsels of his earlier Minister. This enterprise, far more physical than intellectual in its character and operation, made the courage also of George the Second different in kind from that of his father. That of George the First, though undoubted and never-failing, was as unobtrusive as it was unheroic in its mode of manifestation. But George the Second, whose daring impetuosity on the battle-field and energetic resolution on the approach of danger might have seemed more akin to the heroic mould,

lost even the credit which he was entitled to on this account by his unconcealed self-satisfaction at his heroic qualities, and his naïve appeals to all the world for acknowledgment and admiration of the same. His self-satisfaction was so genuine, and really to some extent so well founded, that it is rescued from the imputation of being mere bombast; but it derogated sadly from the dignity of the king and the man, and even induced some persons to entertain most unjust doubts as to the reality of his courage itself. He was fond of talking of his own acts of valour, and when in one of these fits of self-admiration, his gait assumed a corresponding character, and he strutted in the most approved stage fashion. The malicious wits of the day were not slow in seizing on this piece of royal absurdity, to which the insignificant person and features of the King gave additional piquancy, and 'little George' was sorely handled by them for this unheroic weakness.

But in reality this excessive self-laudation and ostentatious boasting were the index much less of absolute self-esteem than of habitual self-distrust. With all his impulsive eagerness to throw himself into situations which demanded the possession of much higher intellectual qualities than his, there was an unavowed but recurring sense of his own inferiority, which made him all the more anxious to assert himself on points on which he had some claims to public

admiration, and all the more delighted with himself that he had such claims. Lord Chesterfield saw this clearly enough, observing that 'he was thought to have a great opinion of his own abilities; but, on the contrary, I am very sure that he had a great distrust of them in matters of State.' But although he had the weakness to endeavour to conceal the extent to which he actually relied on the opinion and was governed by the advice of his wife and her adviser, Robert Walpole, he had the good sense generally to follow that advice, and to cherish no ill-feeling either towards wife or minister for being so much wiser than himself. Though he had not ability enough to inaugurate and conduct a policy himself, he was clear-headed enough to appreciate it and adopt it when recommended by others, if he could only be induced to forego his first impulses, and really listen to expostulation. Lord Waldegrave testifies that, 'within the compass of my own observation, I have known few persons of high rank who could bear contradiction better, provided the intention was apparently good, and the manner decent.' But he resented in the most passionate manner any overt attempt to dictate to him, and to ignore or lower his dignity and intellectual status in the eyes of the public. His wife, who had greater power over him than any human being, was compelled, we are told, though he was quite conscious of its existence and effects, to avoid every direct and open exercise of it, even in her most

private communications with him, and to prevail by gradually insinuating into his mind the counsels which she wished him to follow. This anxiety to conceal from himself as well as from others the extent to which he really was subject to her influence led to the assumption towards her sometimes in public—when he was in a bad humour or dissatisfied with his own conduct—of an arrogant and contemptuous manner, which did not in the smallest degree represent his real estimate of her, or any real want of feeling towards her. Lord Hervey divined justly that his roughness of bearing towards particular individuals was by no means an index of a corresponding feeling of dislike, but often arose merely from a transient fit of ill-humour. And, like many extremely sensitive persons, he was very careless and inconsiderate of the feelings of others, particularly his wife's, for whom he had the greatest affection. This is what Lord Hervey calls his 'unfeeling heart' and his 'neutrality between hardness and tenderness.' But George really had strong and warm feelings, and was as constant in his friendships as he was vehement and tenacious in his antipathies. Lord Waldegrave tells us that 'to those servants who attend his person, and do not disturb him with frequent solicitations, he is ever gracious and affable.'

But a point on which his character differed most decidedly from that of his father's was his sentimentality. This was not 'sentiment' in the English sense of the

word, for George the Second was prosaic and matter-of-fact enough in the ordinary affairs of life to rob him of all pretensions to that quality in English eyes. He thought poetry and romances very sad rubbish and a thorough waste of time, and he had not the faintest eye for the fine arts. History was his favourite reading, and his preference for one painting over another was based entirely on his greater familiarity with it as a piece of household furniture. Yet he was sentimental, notwithstanding, and romantic after a German fashion. He was a great letter-writer, and whether to his mistresses or his wife he poured forth on paper a minute chronicle of all his doings, thoughts, fears, hopes, and feelings generally, with all the unreserve of a school-girl correspondent. Then, when not engaged in actual business, or in reviewing his darling soldiers, he lounged away his time in the rooms of his wife, or strolled about in the moonlight with his mistress, talking and talking about himself and his feelings in much the same maundering and wearisome fashion. Such sentimentality was there in his amours, that it was considered very doubtful by his contemporaries, and is still undecided, whether his relation with the Countess of Suffolk at any rate, went beyond this dreary sentimental flirtation. Even with his other and later mistress, Madame de Walmoden, whom he created Countess of Yarmouth after the Queen's death, and by whom he is understood to have had a

son, this somewhat sickly sentimental intercourse was evidently the main charm. It is doubtful whether George ever really felt any strong affection for anyone but his wife. But he liked female society, and found in women the most congenial confidants. In his choice of these favourites, too, he displayed much better taste than his father. And although George's monotony of habits made him, particularly as he grew older, a somewhat tiresome companion, he was naturally by no means dull or lifeless, but generally cheerful, and even gay. 'In the drawing room,' says Lord Waldegrave, 'he is gracious and polite to the ladies, and remarkably cheerful and familiar with those who are handsome, or with the few of his old acquaintance who were beauties in his younger days. His conversation is very proper for a *tête-à tête*. He then talks freely on most subjects, and very much to the purpose; but he cannot discourse with the same ease, nor has he the faculty of laying aside the King in larger company, not even in those parties of pleasure which are composed of his most intimate acquaintance.' Before his accession to the throne, his Court at Leicester House was emphatically what is expressed in the word 'jolly.' The leading wits and beauties of the day were there daily assembled to cap epigrams, and laugh at one another, and enjoy themselves very thoroughly after the fashion of that day. And in this circle the great attraction for George himself was gay, saucy, witty Mary Bellenden,

with whom he sought to establish the ambiguous relation to which we have just referred, and who, notwithstanding her refusal of his suit, alienated his affection only by a clandestine marriage. The Countess of Suffolk, though with no pretensions to beauty, was a pleasing, amiable woman, of no ability, but much good sense, who appears to have captivated all about her by her sweet, gentle manners. She, however, seems to have latterly lent herself to political intriguers, and to have annoyed the King by opposing him frequently on his fixed opinions, and the sentimental character of their intercourse thus ceasing, George soon became heartily tired of her. Madame de Walmoden was a handsome, brilliant German countess. It was characteristic of George the Second that, though he conferred rank or bestowed money upon his mistresses, he never allowed them to have any real political influence, and resented their interference in State affairs. These he talked over with his wife alone, requiring to know everything and to have a good reason for everything,—full of objections and prejudices and vehement resolutions, but in the end almost always following her advice. A woman who could so manage such a jealous, irritable, and emotional character as to secure his entire confidence, and establish firmly by his side so sagacious an adviser as Robert Walpole, must have possessed considerable abilities, though she cannot pretend to the highest intellectual rank.

She had a clear head, great tact, and insight into character, perfect self-knowledge, and perfect self-command. What her inmost feeling towards her husband may have been it is difficult to divine, but the deepest affection could not have produced more complete self-devotion to his interests and his person. He was always her primary consideration. She watched over him with unsleeping and unwearying solicitude, and she watched over the interests and prosperity of England because *his* interests and happiness were therein involved. And with all his occasional neglect and roughness towards her, George fully appreciated her unselfish devotion. Nowhere in history is there such a tribute by a royal husband to the merits of his wife as that preserved by Lord Hervey from the lips of the King himself. To this devotion Caroline sacrificed the natural delicacy of a woman and a wife. Unable to divert him from his ambiguous pursuit of other women, she made herself his confidant, and even in that strange department for a wife became his habitual adviser. It is probable that the wit or malignity of the memoir-writers has exaggerated the indecent grotesqueness of this relation between husband and wife, but their concurrent testimony seems to leave no doubt of the fact itself. It must be observed that there was perhaps not the usual conventional immorality in this strange conduct, for it would appear that both George and his wife were freethinkers on matters of

religion—Theists, but nothing more—and, high as has been the morality of many Theists, we do not know what was the code of morals attached to the particular form of Theism adopted by the King and Queen. The other point on which the character of Queen Caroline falls below the highest standard is her assumption of the *rôle* of a learned lady, and a critic on all possible points of art, literature, philosophy, and theology. Her foible was to be thought a sort of female 'Admirable Crichton,' and accordingly she turned her dressing-room into a scene of the most bizarre character, in which bishops and wits, royal chaplains and freethinkers, statesmen, men of arts, and men of fashion were mixed up with coiffeurs and waiting-women, and the latest epigram hustled the church-service for the day. In the midst, the Queen listened to elaborate compliments and complimentary odes, or chattered glibly—she was a great talker—or sat in judgment on a metaphysical controversy involving the nature of all things and the destinies of mankind. This was a weakness, but it had its advantages in a national point of view. It fostered intellectual tastes and pursuits, and it filled the higher places in the Church with learned and good men, instead of the usual tame recipients of Ministerial patronage.

But devoted to each other and well-meaning as were the royal husband and wife, there was a skeleton in their house. This was their eldest son, Frederick,

whom his mother despised and disliked, yet half-pitied and half-excused, but whom his father loathed as well as despised without a mitigating feeling. The unreserve and intensity of this feeling cannot be defended in such a relation, but it was far from groundless. Even by the confession of those who attached themselves to his person, Frederick was as thoroughly worthless as it is possible for a mere fool to be. With a few showy external accomplishments which deceived nobody as to his real intellectual capacity, his was as flimsy a nature as can be conceived. False and treacherous to every one, thoroughly mean and cowardly in his disposition, and an habitual and purposeless liar, he was injurious to himself more than to anyone else, and except as the heir-apparent to the Crown, which he happily did not live to possess, his life was thoroughly insignificant, and his death produced no other effect but dismay to the little coterie who had gathered round him as a centre of cabal, and a sense of relief and deliverance in the rest of the nation.

If Lord Hervey is to be believed, we owe a debt of gratitude to Queen Caroline for modifying and controlling the views of George the Second on a point of vital national importance. At his accession, according to this writer, George had the ambition of really reigning, of employing only second-rate men as his ministers, and of keeping them in the position of business clerks, while the reins of government

remained in his own hands. With such an irritable, impetuous character as his, a government so *personal* could scarcely have failed to bring with it grave constitutional differences with Parliament. But if there is any truth in Lord Hervey's statement (and Lord Waldegrave hints at the King's personal preference for a German autocracy), George (whether under his wife's advice or not) soon learned the impracticability of this project—probably felt his own incapacity for the lofty part as soon as he was called upon to act on his theory—and for the rest of his life became what the courtier-writers thought slavishly observant of the feelings of the House of Commons, and was affected considerably (after his wife's early death) in his estimate of advisers by the influence which statesmen could obtain and retain in that assembly. But the choice which he actually made is probably attributable to his own good sense, rather than to any theory of Parliamentary government. The sagacity of his wife, confirmed by his own clear practical perceptions, in the first instance recommended Walpole to his confidence; and habit, and a sense of gratitude for past services, joined to the dying recommendation of the Queen, kept that Minister for a long time in the same position. By that time, George, who was never an uninformed or unintelligent agent in the hands of his Minister, had learned enough of men and manners, and the management of both, to be tolerably able to act and choose for him-

self. He was not by nature a very clever or wise man, but he had fallen into an excellent course of training, and he was an apt and careful pupil. His prejudices, it is true, sometimes, as in the case of Pitt, interfered with and postponed too long what was for the real interests of England; but he was never hopelessly deaf to reason, and when he was once convinced of his duty, he fulfilled it with manful resignation.

On the whole, while it is impossible to look upon George the Second as a superior man or a great king, and though we must sometimes smile at his absurdities, we cannot in justice deny to him the character of an earnest, well-meaning, intelligent man, and of an honest, though not a very dignified sovereign.

GEORGE THE THIRD.

In speaking of the conduct of George the Third as a King we must not forget that we are speaking of one in whom there was not only the predisposition to insanity, but that disease had exhibited itself in an open attack before he had been five years on the English Throne, and during the remainder of whose reign there were at intervals of time three more ascertained attacks of a similar kind—in one case a very prolonged one—before that which in the year 1810 finally disabled him for all rational intercourse. It is therefore impossible to estimate his moral responsibility even during the periods when he was for all practical purposes seemingly quite sane, as we should that of one whose mind was not thus ever subject to these mental derangements. And in George the Third there are several characteristics which appear to be closely connected with this diseased state of mind. Taking this consideration into due account, his character seems to be tolerably clear and consistent from the beginning to the end of his public career. Lord Waldegrave, who was his

'Governor' for a short time while he was Prince of Wales, and who has given his impressions of him two years before he ascended the throne, seems to strike the keynote to the whole subsequent man. 'His parts,' he says, 'though not excellent, will be found very tolerable, if ever they are properly exercised. He is strictly honest, but wants that frank and open behaviour which makes honesty appear amiable. When he had a very scanty allowance, it was one of his favourite maxims that men should be just before they are generous; his income is now very considerably augmented, but his generosity has not increased in equal proportion. His religion is free from all hypocrisy, but is not of the most charitable sort; he has rather too much attention to the sins of his neighbour. He has spirit, but not of the active kind; and does not want resolution, but it is mixed with too much obstinacy. He has great command of his passions, and will seldom do wrong except when he mistakes wrong for right; but as often as this shall happen, it will be difficult to undeceive him, because he is uncommonly indolent, and has strong prejudices. His want of application and aversion to business would be far less dangerous, was he eager in the pursuit of pleasure; for the transition from pleasure to business is both shorter and easier than from a state of total inaction. He has a kind of unhappiness in his temper, which if it be not conquered before it has taken too deep a root,

will be a source of frequent anxiety. Whenever he is displeased, his anger does not break out into heat and violence; but he becomes sullen and silent, and retires to his closet: not to compose his mind by study or contemplation, but merely to indulge the melancholy enjoyment of his own ill-humour. Even when the fit is ended, unfavourable symptons very frequently return, which indicate that on certain occasions His Royal Highness has too correct a memory. Though I have mentioned his good and bad qualities without flattery and without aggravation, allowances should still be made on account of his youth and his bad education; for though the Bishop of Peterborough [Dr. John Thomas], now Bishop of Salisbury, the preceptor, Mr. Stone, sub-governor, and Mr. Scott the sub-preceptor, were men of sense, men of learning, and worthy, good men, they had but little weight and influence. The mother and the nursery always prevailed. During the course of the last year, there has indeed been some alteration; the authority of the nursery has gradually declined, and the Earl of Bute, by the assistance of the mother, has now the entire confidence. But whether this change will be greatly to his Royal Highness's advantage is a nice question, which cannot hitherto be determined with any certainty.'

The forebodings of Lord Waldegrave were only too soon verified, for, next to his mother, Lord Bute

proved the most mischievous adviser of the Prince. To one placed in the situation in which young George William found himself on the premature death of his father, the guidance and influence of his mother must have been of the greatest importance. The Princess of Wales—Augusta of Saxe-Gotha—does not appear to have made any distinct impression on the minds of her contemporaries till after the death of her husband. For a short time after that event her conduct created a general impression of good sense and good feeling. She broke up the little Anti-Court which had gathered round Frederick, and seemed to wish to place herself in every respect at the disposal of the King and in accord with his wishes; and George the Second appreciating this behaviour treated her with marked kindness and deference to her wishes. But no sooner did the question of her son's marriage arise, than the Princess dropped the mask, and began to show what her real character was. She was determined that she herself and her favourites alone should rule the future King, and as a first and essential step to this domination she resolved that the choice of his wife should be hers and not the King's, and that the future partner of her son should be one from whose intellect she need fear no rival in the sway over his mind. The old King unluckily gave her a pretext for opposing *his* choice by endeavouring to make a match for his grandson with another member of the

House of Brunswick, a very charming and accomplished young Princess who fairly captivated old George himself. Had this match been accomplished, the new Court of England would have borne a very different aspect from what it afterwards assumed under the auspices of Queen Charlotte. But the Princess of Wales prevented this, and from that time, with occasional intervals of suspended hostility, there was a revival of the old antagonism of Leicester House to St. James'. In herself, Augusta of Wales —though a mere child, and a very childish child when she became the wife of Frederick, for she brought her great doll with her, to the astonishment and amusement of the courtiers—was a complete embodiment of the narrowest autocratic ideas and prejudices of a very self-important little German Court. With the most absolute ideas of the position and rights of a sovereign prince she combined an overbearing disposition, much selfishness, a sagacity which did not rise above the grade of cunning, and a cold heart. She had just talent enough to tyrannise over her own children when young, and to render their home a far from happy one, but neither the ability nor the tact to maintain her authority when their relative positions became changed. She had formed the lowest estimate of her son George's abilities, and endeavoured to bring him up in the homeliest and least intelligent manner, that she and her favourite, Bute, might all the more easily and

thoroughly rule in his name, whilst implanting in his mind the highest ideas of the dignity and irresponsibility of a King, In this she made a great mistake. Young George, indeed, readily formed the habit of domestic pursuits and homely living thus recommended to him, and from the indolence of mind of which Lord Waldegrave speaks, exhibited no desire to think and act for himself as long as the sweets of supreme power remained untasted by him; he also received into his mind with equal readiness the autocratic lessons of his mother and Bute; but he did so in a spirit that they little anticipated. They had taught him that he ought to reign himself, and not be, as his grandfather and great-grandfather had been, the mere serfs of Parliament, and those great families who ruled in Parliament; but *they* really meant by this that he was so to reign as their puppet, while he only looked upon them as necessary and convenient teachers in the first steps towards his personal government. With the possession of the title of King his ambition awoke, and as Lord Waldegrave had presaged, with it his indolence disappeared, and he soon began to think and act for himself. He always paid a marked filial respect and deference to his mother, which she rigidly exacted, and with which she was soon obliged to be content, —and naturally he at first looked to Bute as his counsellor and premier. But he soon found out that the favourite was unequal to carrying out the lessons

he had taught, and both Bute and the Princess gradually disappeared from the political arena, though their names long survived their actual influence as popular bugbears. George then and thenceforth acted for himself, and England was astonished to find itself again exposed to what it had imagined was banished with the exiled line of Princes,—the personal rule of the King.

Nor was George without some qualifications for the task he had undertaken,—that of making the Throne instead of the Treasury Bench, or the House of Commons, the pivot of government. He had all the courage, resolution, and pertinacity of his family, and the enterprise of his grandfather, without the checks of his self-distrust and good sense. His own prudence and sagacity, though similar in kind, were greater than his mother's. Thus, he spoke and acted as if nothing should induce him to forego a resolution he had once avowed, and as long as it was possible to produce any effect on the minds of his Ministers or the nation by a belief in the inflexibility of his resolution, he seemed as bent on persevering as any Stuart King had ever been. When a change of ministry and the admission of those whose principles were essentially opposed to his autocratic ideas seemed almost inevitable, he wrote in such terms as the following:—'Honestly, I would rather lose the crown I now wear, than bear the ignominy of possessing it under their shackles;' and again, 'I

am still ready to accept any part of them that will come to the assistance of my present efficient Ministers; but whilst any ten men in the kingdom will stand by me, I will not give myself up to bondage. My dear lord, I will rather risk my crown than do what I think personally disgraceful. It is impossible this nation should not stand by me. If they will not, they shall have another King, for I never will put my hand to what will make me miserable to the last hour of my life;' and once more, 'Rather than be shackled by those desperate men (if the nation will not stand by me), I will rather see any form of Government introduced into this island, and lose my crown, rather than bear it as a disgrace.' But when he found that all this high-toned bluster did not answer its purpose, George sullenly submitted, in time to avoid any such crisis as that which he so magnanimously professed to be willing to encounter, showing his resentment plainly enough in his manner, but changing his mode of action to one less personally hazardous. On some of these occasions he talked of going away to Hanover, as a sure means of bringing the nation to its senses; but a confidential adviser suggesting that it might not be so easy, in that case, for him ever to return to England again, no more was heard of this tentative abdication. In fact, George the Third was really far too shrewd a man to lose an assured position to avoid any transient

humiliation. If he could persuade the English world that his threats would be carried out, and so induce them to give way to his wishes, so much the better; but if they refused to believe in or be moved by this demonstration, George quietly covered his defeat by making their success as unpleasant as possible to the victors.

This brings us to another phase in the character of George the Third. We have seen that Lord Waldegrave speaks of his want of frankness. It is probable that the brooding temperament and indirectness of conduct which are among the least pleasing of George's characteristics were closely connected with the mental disease to which he had a constant tendency. Secretiveness and cunning are usually marked features in an organisation so affected, and the suspiciousness of others and the strong and irrational likes and dislikes which are main operating causes in such a nature produce as a necessary result dissimulation and crafty underhand intrigue. When George, then, found that his violent declarations and over-bearing wilfulness produced no effect, he restrained his morbid impatience (although his reason on several occasions tottered and even temporarily succumbed under the effort), and endeavoured to attain his ends by cunning watchfulness of opportunities. He acquiesced outwardly in the change of advisers and abandonment of cherished policy, and then set to work to undermine the position of the

intrusive counsellors, and to thwart as much as he could venture to do the development of their plans. He intrigued, in fact, against the Ministers he could not meet openly, and waited for the moment when he could safely dismiss them again with ignominy. Hence arose the political phenomenon which went under the name of 'The King's Friends'—a set of men who formed a backstairs Anti-Cabinet, the object of which was to employ the King's name and the influence of his personal sentiments in organising an Opposition to his ostensible Cabinet advisers, both in Parliament and in the country at large. It must not be supposed by this that there was any regularly constituted 'cabal,' or any precisely defined plans of operation for its guidance; but there were nearly always, throughout the reign of George the Third, two or three men—generally not men of high ability, but busy, gossiping intriguers who were irresponsible, and both unavowed and often disavowed agents in making known what the King's real wishes were. With the assistance of such men, and by a careful observation of the variations in the public sentiment, George achieved a success in his plans of personal government which, if we remember the relative position of the Crown and Parliament at the commencement of his reign, seems at first marvellous. In the course of this protracted struggle, the King had to undergo many mortifications and not a few seemingly fatal checks; but he always bent to the

storm in time, and generally knew when and how long to maintain an inflexible position. Nothing but this superior cunning and adroitness could have saved him from a great civil convulsion such as that which destroyed his predecessors in this path of royal aggrandisement, Charles the First and James the Second. But George the Third had concentrativeness of action as well as persistence of purpose; and however tortuous his paths were at times, the tone and direction of his policy were always consistent, and no one had ever cause to suspect him for a moment of having become a convert to Whig constitutional notions, although he might tolerate for a time Whig Ministers, and even (as in the case of his concessions to the revolted American Colonies and his ultimate acknowledgment of their independence) adopt Whig measures and Whig policy. This persistent uniformity of sentiment, suspended in action from time to time by the necessities of his position, but always reappearing again to the public eye, produced by degrees a great and lasting effect on the public mind. The very fact of the unity and permanent position of Kingship as compared with the shifting constituents of a House of Commons, and the diversity of personal interests in the House of Lords, was a formidable instrument when joined to a distinctly perceived and unwavering unity of sentiment and purpose. Against it the power of the great Whig Houses had in reality little basis of

stability. Their 'connection' had become too large for the requirements of Ministerial patronage. They could have furnished two or three entire Cabinets out of their ranks, and supernumerary placeholders to any extent. So there were always disappointed men and jealous expectants, and George had little difficulty in using one element against another, until all cohesion and all solidity in their influence were at an end. He turned against the Whig statesmen the influence of the Crown—both legitimate and corrupt—which they had so long availed themselves of for their own individual or party purposes, and which they had come to regard as quite as much their own property as their family and pocket boroughs. The old Duke of Newcastle beheld with astonishment and dismay his long cherished Government boroughs turned into agents for his own overthrow. The Whig families thus paid the penalty of having converted the natural organ of popular feeling into a mere department of Ministerial patronage. Without consciously abandoning the popular principles which had enabled them to withstand and overthrow the tyranny of the House of Stuart, they had fallen under the influence of long tenure of office, and had nearly forgotten their origin and the real conditions of their existence as a Party. Like the narrow and select civic representation into which the Spanish Cortes had degenerated when its privileges were successfully assailed by Charles the Fifth and Philip

the Second, the English House of Commons had lost its popular basis, and could evoke no popular enthusiasm in its contest with the Crown. The House of Lords, distracted by rival factions, soon also succumbed to the liberal exercise of royal favour and the dread of royal displeasure. Not only were Lord-Lieutenants of Counties dismissed from their office for voting against the King's wishes, but officers of the Army and Navy were deprived of their commissions for a similar offence.

The King himself was a most diligent man of business. No permanent Secretary ever knew more —few half so much—of the minutiæ of official life and of the *personnel* of the civil and other services. George the Third worked as hard as a Government clerk is supposed to work, and his interest in such bureaucratic details corresponds well with the type of his intellect. With two or three fixed ideas, or rather prejudices, held and pursued with the intensity of monomania, he had neither the capacity nor the inclination to form any wide or elevated views. His education had been grossly neglected, or rather he had been allowed or encouraged to neglect it, and his mind, sharp and retentive, but narrow and essentially unphilosophical, contented itself within a sphere as limited as it was well explored. His idea of personal government was that of not being thwarted in his own wishes, and of knowing and sanctioning everything that was done. A great policy either at home

or abroad had no meaning for him, and presented itself, if at all, only in a negative shape. He was a strict Protestant Church of England man, and no domestic policy must encourage or seem to encourage Roman Catholicism. He had severe ideas of discipline and legal and official authority, and nothing must be done to unduly relax the one or to weaken the other. He had a horror of popular politics and popular interference in government, except in support of the rights and under the leadership of the Crown. He was fond of the lower orders in their proper place; he loved to mix familiarly with them, in the spirit of paternal condescension in which a German potentate chats with a peasant; but he resented all independent action or thought on their part as subversive of authority and government. He wished them to be paid and fed according to their condition, and educated in a manner appropriate to the state of life 'unto which it had pleased God to call them.' He had a sincere and strong desire for the happiness of his people and the welfare of the nation; but it was essential that there should be a general spirit of subordination, the proper and necessary amount of taxes duly paid, and the full number of persons, young and old, as determined by the fixed processes of justice, whipped, imprisoned, or hung every year, if government was to be carried on at all. All ideas beyond these were sedition and anarchy. After the assistance given to the American colonists by France,

his foreign policy consisted in little but a blind hatred of that nation and of all 'French ideas.' During two periods of his life, George the Third had the opportunity of putting these ideas of order and justice into practical operation. In 1770 he found in Lord North a pliant, though not always a sympathising, agent of his views, and every one knows how disastrous was the personal administration of that period; how the low-minded demagogue Wilkes bearded King and Parliament, and how the acrimonious sententiousness of 'Junius' engrossed public attention; how incapable was the administration at home, and how disastrous the events abroad which robbed us of an empire. A second time George the Third had the opportunity of showing England the benefits of personal government, and under singularly favourable circumstances. At his side stood a man of real ability and thoughtful mind, personally inflexibly honest, disinterestedly desirous of promoting the wishes of the King as well as the prosperity of the nation, and with a singular mastery alike of business and men. In the younger Pitt no doubt George the Third expected to meet with a second pliant tool, like the easy-tempered North; but he met with a mind which, though compliant on many points with the royal prejudices, to the injury of his lasting reputation as a statesman, had naturally as stiff and proud a nature as his own, and was as little satisfied with the name without the reality of power. The King could not venture to

order about such a man in the insolent manner in which he had treated George Grenville; and he was wise enough to perceive this. The result was a tacit compromise by which the King for many years always consulted Mr. Pitt, was much influenced by his views, and left him a considerable share of administrative power and influence; but by which Mr. Pitt on his side gave up all idea of a really great domestic and foreign policy, in deference to the King's rooted prejudices. The French Revolution greatly assisted King and Minister in holding their own against all opponents,—by annihilating the Whig party, and driving the terrified nation into a fanatic admiration of the personal government of the Sovereign. Every needful reform was refused or postponed indefinitely, and people were educated into a state of public abuses and general jobbery and corruption as the normal condition of life. It has tasked all the ability and energies of the statesmen of William the Fourth and Victoria to remedy the effects of this long mal-administration.

Towards the end of the first French war, George became tired of even the limited check which the talents and established public ascendancy of Pitt placed on his own autocracy; he became jealous as well as tired of this higher intellectual companionship, and began once more to intrigue against his Minister with a new set of 'King's Friends.' A difference between himself and Pitt on the subject of Catholic

Emancipation, as a necessary sequel to the Act of Union with Ireland, was the occasion of his giving vent to an outburst of dogmatic self-assertion which produced a recurrence of his terrible disease; Pitt resigned; Addington, the 'King's Friend,' became Minister; but when Pitt again returned to power, the question of Catholic Emancipation was not again mooted by him, the well-known dangerous state of the King's mind thus enabling the latter to carry his point and to endanger the safety of the Empire without further resistance.

But if the absolutist notions which the King's mother had instilled into his mind exposed both England and himself to great danger, and inflicted nearly irreparable injury on the former—the home-loving and homely habits which that princess had also cultivated in him produced a great accession to his personal popularity, and constituted no small ingredient in his political power. As an affectionate husband to a plain, dull, narrow-minded woman—whose naturally kind feelings had been stiffened into something like insensibility by the formalities of Court ceremonial—and as the father of a large and stately family, George the Third appealed to one of the marked characteristics of English middle-class sentiment, and commanded universal sympathy and regard as exhibiting a pattern of English domestic life. His ill-judged partialities and severities with his children were not at the time fully known, or if

so, not estimated at their due importance, and the public delighted in seeing him the centre figure of a striking family group on the terraces of Windsor, and in listening to stories of his affability to his subjects of all classes in his country walks; while they smiled with kindly indulgence, and a certain satisfaction at his stammering, 'What! what! what!' and other oddities of speech, and at the *naïve* and grotesque ignorance of the stock-knowledge of ordinary life which he displayed on such occasions. The pupil of Bute was no longer remembered as such in those days, and the portrait which has descended to us from the last generation is not that of the astute plotter for irresponsible authority, but of the 'good old King.'

So far as his narrowness of judgment and prejudices permitted, George was a just and a kind man; he was a religious man, too, as far as the general intention to do right and a regular observance of the religious forms prescribed by a Church entitle any one to that character. He had good abilities, chiefly of the administrative order, and some power of penetration into the dispositions, and especially the weaknesses, of those around him; but he generally dreaded and seldom understood the higher class of genius. He was too apt to nourish a supposed injury, and his memory was too good for him easily to exercise the virtue of Christian forgiveness. But he was not implacable, and his resentment was generally

sullen and passive, rather than aggressive; and if he forgot old services too soon when his wishes were at length thwarted, he soon became reconciled to individuals when he thought he saw in them real marks of devotion to his person. Personal government, indeed, was the bane of his reign, and an overweening idea of his own paramount importance and competency lay at the root of all his errors. Disease probably rendered this characteristic more masterful, but disease also perhaps quickened his intellectual faculties, and made him more than a match for men of actually far higher intellectual capacities. If we assign his duplicity to the influence of disease, we may, on the whole, pronounce him to have been a good man; but it is impossible not to regard him, as far as statesmanship is concerned, as one of the most inefficient and unfortunate of our rulers.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

00031009

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018